MAWEDO

THE PALM-LAND MAIDEN

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BY

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AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

INTRODUCTION.

In this story I have gathered many of the habits and customs of Equatorial Africa, and some of the scenes occurring in the lives of ordinary African women, into an account of the life of one actual family.

Mawedo was a real being; but in her story I include events taken from the lives of several other women.

Almost all the incidents here narrated occurred under my own observation, or were related to me by reliable informants. I have invented very little. But, in order to cover up the identity of persons still living, I have introduced anachronisms, have suppressed and changed names of persons, and have interchanged names of places.

R. H. N.

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NOTE.

In the pronunciation of the dialects of Equatorial Africa,

1. Give the English sounds to all the consonants except *g*, which is always hard.

2. The letter *y* is always a consonant.

3. Give to the vowel *a* the force of *a* in *ah!* or *father*, *e. g.*, "Baraka," "mwanga."

To the vowel *â*, the force of *a* in *law*, *e. g.*, "malângâ," "tândâkâ."

To the vowel *e* the force of *e* in *they*, or of *a* in *fate*, *e. g.*, "Nengenenge," "ejaka."

To the vowel *ĕ* the force of *e* in *met*, *e. g.*, "Mbâdĕ," "nyĕngĕlĕ."

To the vowel *i* the force of *i* in *machine*, *e. g.*, "Benita," "ikenga."

To the vowel *o* the force of *o* in *bone*, *e. g.*, "Alongo," "kongongo."

To the vowel *u* the force of *u* in *rule*, or of *oo* in *moon*, *e. g.*, "Ujiji," "uhaka.

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I. IN THE SUNSET.

A LITTLE four years-old girl stood on the bank of the Ogowe river, in childish glee plucking the red and white corollas of the clerodendron that clambered over the dense bushes lining the path to the water-side. Aimlessly she flung from her the crushed petals into the swift stream that whirled and foamed, vexed in the rocky chasm to which it was confined. Then she laughed as the swirling eddies snatched, as if hungry, the broken flowers, and swallowed them in their vortex, or carried them around the short turn of the river out of her sight.

On a gnarled root of the wild mango-tree that leaned out over the stream, whose waters had undermined its hold on the steep clay bank, sat the little girl's brother, two years older than she, dangling his bare legs in the air as he pretended to fish. His extemporized rod was a young palm-frond divested of its leaflets, and the line was the strong fibre of pine-apple leaves. Civilized pins had indeed been heard of in that interior part of Africa, but they were spoken of as part of the White Man's wealth, and were too rare to be used by small boys as hooks. A thorn served as fish-hook on that day. Had the boy been really fishing, roughly-made iron hooks could have been procured in the village smithy, forged from iron smelted in rude furnaces from native ores, whose seams are found cropping out occasionally on the surface of the ground. The secret of his angling in a locality where the most skilful fishermen would have had to seek in vain,

was to be read in the actual fish which his mother was then cleaning by the little rivulet that there joined the larger stream. That fish had been caught, by one of their village men, a half-mile distant; as the woman and her two children were emerging from the village on their way to her plantation, the boy's hungry eyes had seen a basket full of fishes lying in the street, and his quick fingers had stolen one and slipped it among the plantain leaves of his own basket. Safely out of the village, he had shown it to his mother, and at her bidding he was going through the piscatory motions on which to base the claim that he himself had caught the fish, if suspicion for its loss should happen to fall on him.

And now the scraping of the fish-scales was done, and the mother, looking up, saw that the day was passing, for the sun had sunk below the tree-tops. All animated nature was hasting to prepare for the rapid-

ly falling night. The blue kingfisher, with quick dart and petulant cry, left his perch on a dead branch to seek his well-concealed nest. The flock of pelicans lifted their unwieldy bodies, and on wide-spread white wings slowly sailed away for their ragged nests in the dead tree-tops. The great blue heron gathered up his long legs, and with low flight, slowly flapping his long, curved wings, sank among the tall, thick-stemmed grasses that fringed a quieter reach of water up stream. Overhead, above the forest, hasted hundreds of red-tailed gray parrots, screaming their harsh note, as with quick, labored stroke they winged their way to where their ever open-mouthed young squawked in their nests in the hollow trees. The evening breeze came with refreshing breath to cool the woman's face, vexed with the hot day; and its dampness extracted the fragrance of the parti-colored flowers that hung from vines, and of the pea-shaped blos-

soms of the many pod-bearing trees that lined the banks.

Not all native Africans have the typical thick, out-turned lips, and flat, coarse nose that we are accustomed to associate with the negro. This woman, still quite young, had been graceful in form; her thin nostrils were dilating in the scented wind, and her features, "dark but comely," lost for a moment the imbruted expression that oppression and sorrow had marked on her youth. To her, life was all sunset in its shadows.

Was it a stirring of some gift which under the fostering hand of Christian civilization might have made her an artist, that caused her eye to rest, with sad questioning, on the mysterious glory of the clouds, blazing in red and gold between the green setting of the forest below and the blue vault above? While everything in and about her life only crushed out whatever was beautiful and good, she seldom thought of looking at the rare

glories of the tropical sunset. A handful of red beads would sooner have elicited her admiration. But to-day the village life had been especially cruel; and, gazing still at the flaming furnace of the west, she found a strange rest in the unrest of the constantly varying shapes that to a civilized eye might have seemed domes and pillars, but to this woman, knowing nothing of domes and pillars, resembled so many gigantic elephants, white and golden trunked, under enormous palm-fronds tinted red and gray, by rivers that flowed like molten brass between deep, violet-hued banks flecked with ferns. Streaming out over all, burnishing, dissolving, re-creating, fading, were the wands of light that arm-like shot from the sunk magician of day. They glanced on the lower line of clouds, but those clouds had faded out their brilliant life, and lay in misty grayness, only their edges responding, as with electric flash, to the magician's touch. They reached into

the darkening zenith, and spread their weird fingers, flinging warm, rosy light to the portals of the north and the south. But the mystic arms were drawn back no longer with fingers rosy and warm, but weary with their wild play, and bruised and broken and darkened; even as this woman's heart had reached out with affection, and had recoiled broken, bitter, and hateful.

She was startled by the fierce snort and deep bellow of the river-horse from the pool down river, where he had spent the day in stupid and sleepy repose beneath the water, only lifting his great head above the surface every few minutes to breathe and spout. He was now leading his herd up the bank for their nightly raid on the plantations, and the realization of this fact brought back life's hard lines and cares to the cloud-watcher. Thinking of her own patch of cassava and plantain, she laughed a short bitter laugh as she derisively shouted to the huge brutes,

"Are you going to my garden?" Then she stooped to chide to quietness her little girl, who, having a while before stopped pelting the water with flowers, had been sitting by her brother, who had descended from his perch on the gnarled root. The little girl, frightened by the snort of the hippopotamus that had startled her mother, had left her brother and was grasping her mother's knee for protection.

Warned by the coming darkness, the woman now snatched up her basket, said to the children, "Yogoni" (come), and hastily gathered her burdens for the remainder of the walk to her plantation.

II. AYĔNWĖ, A SLAVE.

A-YĔ-NWĖ was a slave. But she had once been free. Six years before, she was living, a young wife, in a large town of her own Ba-te-ke tribe beyond the head of the Ogowe river, on the sources of the Alima, one of the affluents of the Congo-Livingstone, flowing into that mighty river near Stanley Pool. Her family was poor, and she and her young husband were accorded but slight position in the strife for honor in the town talks, or when decisions about quarrels were rendered in the public waiting-house. To their poverty was added the disadvantage of belonging to the weaker branch of the family. The husband, indeed, deserved very little consideration, for he was indolent and disinclined to physical exertion, and had little intelligence or force of character, while he made up in arrogant violence what he lacked in actual

power. He was disliked by his superiors, and feared by his equals or inferiors.

Ayĕnwĕ's grace and good looks would have won her favor, and her quick intelligence and commendable energy might have commanded respect, had she been prudent and patient. But her pride resented the slights put on her family, and her sharp tongue was too fond of sarcasm, and became wreckless in scattering the fire-brands of slander, and bitter in curses and insults when engaged in a wordy quarrel.

No wonder, then, that when an evil day came, as come many evil days in the lawlessness of that country, and a stronger faction of the tribe pressed the chief of the village for the payment of an old heavy debt, the chief sold his own flesh and blood into slavery. A convenient charge, based on some threat of Ayĕnwĕ's and some violent act of her husband's, was laid against them in village council, and condemnation to loss of freedom,

the common punishment for other than capital crimes, was denounced against them. Such prisoners are held in servitude, not in the limits of their own tribe, nor in the hands of a more interior (and therefore inferior) tribe, but by any tribe "down river" on the way to the Great Sea, where were reported to live the White Spirits who bought, and were believed to eat, the thousands of slaves that yearly were carried thither.

So Ayĕnwĕ and her husband were handed over to the creditor, who, as he would have found them a turbulent possession in his or their own tribe, quickly disposed of them to an adjacent tribe on the western side of the watershed of the Ogowe. There they were separated, the husband being passed on and on, Ayĕnwĕ never knew to where; and she herself fell into the hands of a rich old man of the Okota tribe living near Aduma, south of the upper portion of the Ogowe, by whom she was added to the company of his other

wives, all of whom, whether bond or free, were in effect slaves, having been bought either with a dowry (*ivule*) as a wife, or with a price (*ihambe*) as a slave. Favoritism on the part of their master made servitude less heavy for some than for others. But on this newest slave fell the heaviest lot; for her fellow-slaves, women though they were, in the selfishness and cruelty bred of oppression, practised on her the despotism of which they themselves were victims, and shirked off on her as large as possible a share of their own burdens.

Such treatment of a new-comer is not confined to human nature in a state of slavery. The latest member of the herd or the flock, as every country lad knows, has to fight the old leader, and every new pupil has to square off with the school bully, before the status is determined for the steer in the pasture, the cock in the hennery, or the boy on the play-ground.

But Ayĕnwĕ's life might have gradually become easier, and her burdens would perhaps have been shared by new male and female slaves added from time to time, had not her temper ill brooked her new degradation. She threw herself into a posture of antagonism that unwisely resisted where resistance was vain, and thus drew on herself the objurgation not only of the favorites of the household but even of the old man himself. He wasted few words in rebuke; lashes soon left their bloody marks on her back. The inch-thick hide of the hippopotamus and of the manatee, or sea-cow, cut into long whips with two or more tails at the end, makes a knout (*Kasa-nguvu*) that every Guinea negro hangs on the wall of his home, ready for use on any obstinate member of his harem. Then in vain Ayĕnwĕ would scream, and implore, and protest, and roll in the dust at the old man's feet, and hold up her hands to ward off the blows. They fell, all the same, on face, on

arm, or whatever was exposed, till his fury was spent, and she limped, bleeding, crushed, spirit-broken, not conquered, but embittered, to the poor refuge of her smoky hut, where her wounds would be bathed by some fellow-slave. But the kasa-nguvu made her no more tractable, for the rod nowhere teaches a good lesson when wielded by other than love. Ayĕnwĕ would sob out her paroxysm of ill-will, pain, and shame, and then find her only comfort in fondling her little baby boy.

Though actually born in slavery, and therefore himself a slave, he was to her a memento of her life as a Bateke free-woman, and at his birth she had named him O-va-nga (Ransom) as if with a vague hope that he would some day be her rescuer. This was her one hope, cherished secretly, her consolation in grief.

When, two years later, a little girl baby came to her, she turned her face away from

it, and called it Ma-we-do (Death's), finding in its slave life only aggravated affliction for herself, knowing that as soon as the child should be serviceable for any work, it would be separated from her and made a servant to others.

III THE PLANTATION.

When Ayĕnwĕ turned from the sunset to go to her garden, she hastily stepped to the rivulet where she had washed the fish, and filled an earthen jug, containing several gallons, with the fresh spring-water.

Filthy as most natives are as to what they eat and drink, of decaying flesh, and from unwashed vessels, yet they are disgusted with river-water, because the corpses of slaves and other despised persons are not buried, but flung into the rivers. The sight of these bodies, carried down stream, causes boat-crews to throw aside their paddles and cover their eyes, and go thirsty for a long while, rather than drink from a wave that bears to their superstitious thought the memory of the rigid form that has floated by them. Crews will stop their boats to drink at the

mouths of small affluents, and village women go a long way into the forest to find spring-water.

The water-jug was put in Ayĕnwĕ's large basket, and surrounded by her other and smaller burdens; the roll of mosquito-netting (na-go-mbo), made of a coarse cloth woven from the soft unexpanded leaves of a certain palm-tree, was packed around the jug, with a few extra yards of waist-cloth of the same material for a covering at night; the little bundle of salt (izanga), a few leaves of native-grown tobacco, a pipe, and a cutlass were securely placed. Then, stooping down, Ayĕnwĕ adjusted the basket to the curve of her back, holding it in position by a strap made of wood-fibre, that passed around the lower part of the basket and over her forehead, or the top of her head where the thick mat of braided hair acted as a cushion to support the weight.

The rivulet was crossed by a narrow

bridge made of a fallen tree, whose diameter constituted the entire width. Strong vines had been tied, by some one of those who had more frequent occasion to traverse the bridge, from the tree's uptorn roots on one bank to the remains of its branches on the other bank, thus affording a slight railing. Rude bridges of this kind are the common means for crossing narrow streams. Sometimes, when a single felled tree does not in its fall reach the opposite side, a corresponding tree on that opposite side is cut down so as, in falling, to mingle its top with the top already in mid-stream. Vines are then fastened as a railing from one side to the other, being braced by other vines to the upright branches, and guyed to other trees ashore. These braces are from time to time renewed. As the tree-trunks gradually sink into the river-bed, the vines stretched from shore to shore remain, and are themselves used as a tight-rope, having much the appearance of a sus-

pension-bridge; but they are less dangerous than a tight-rope in that a rest for the hands is afforded.

When the three were safely across the bridge, little Mawedo, who was still fretting at her mother's side, began to cry, saying, "Oh, my mother, I am tired." And her mother added her to her other burdens by seating her astride of her hip, the child clinging to the shoulder of the left arm that was thrown around her back.

Ayĕnwĕ had need to accelerate her pace, for the shadows over the narrow forest-path were now fully deepened into darkness. The forest-sounds about her were alarming to a superstitious mind. Blundering beetles and moths seemed, though desperately trying to avoid her face, to viciously dash themselves against her. Enormous bats, pursuing their search for food, fluttered their clammy wings wildly across the path, or, in zigzag ascent and descent, barely escaped fastening their

claws and rat-like mouths on her bare shoulders. Night-hawks, wheeling rapidly after their insect prey, startled her with their sharp whir. The fireflies glinted from bush to bush, and Ovanga, more daring than herself, caught them and, with a boy's cruelty, waved them on the end of a stick, in imitation of the resinous torch (otya) that his mother carried in her right hand, lighted from the dead-wood brand that she had brought from the village. She regarded with more than half belief the story of some of her people that those flitting fireflies were transmigrated spirits lost on their way to the unknown futurity.

She threw the fitful light of the torch before her on the path. Perhaps the dreaded "pe," or horned-viper (Echidna Gabonica) might be lying sluggishly in the way. For the bite of other snakes native skill professes to have efficient medicines; but so deadly is this one considered that no effort is made to

cure, and the bitten one dies. This reptile is only a few feet in length—not nearly as long as several others, but in proportion thicker than they; two short cartilaginous horns stand erect between its eyes, and its diamond-shaped head and broad back are covered with beautiful, velvety, yellow and black scales. When a native is bitten by this snake, his only hope of relief is to conceal its name and report that he was bitten by some other serpent. Then the native doctor, in his empirical efforts at medication, may stumble on a cure. But if the sufferer reports that he was bitten by a "pe," the doctor, hopeless of success, will not even make an attempt to save.

Or perhaps the light of the torch on the path would reveal the black line of "Driver" ants, crossing it in their march as scavengers to some cast-away corpse, or the body of some wild animal dead of wounds or sickness. These wonderful insects, organized in an army of millions, march rapidly in ranks

of five or six abreast. On each side of the line, at close intervals, are pickets of a size larger than the common race; and up and down the line rush enormous fellows who seem to act as captains. This army eats nothing but animal tissue or its products—dead bodies in the forest, or any living reptile or animal that cannot or does not get out of the way. Fortunately, the ants do not deflect from the line of march in order offensively to attack or pursue. Only when any animal stubbornly stands in their chosen way, or heedlessly treads on them, do they attack. When they come to human habitations, the insects in the walls, the food in the pantry, and the dwellers themselves, are by the army assumed to be in their way; insects and animal food are entirely cleared away, and the human occupants must retreat from room to room, or sometimes actually desert the house, until, in an hour or two, the invading army, which on entering had broken

ranks and deployed in every direction over the house, re-forms, and the entire line moves away, each mouth laden with plunder of insect wings and legs and bodies, and morsels of meat. In crossing a path the ranks close up densely, and the pickets, crowding together, climb, one from each side, over the back of a comrade, and, joining their antennæ in an arch above, form a living tunnel, under which the army rushes. So obvious does this thick black tunnel make itself to the sight of passing animals that none will tread on it; even the ponderous elephant lifts his broad feet above it, and a dog stops and carefully leaps over it. An unwary traveller who may heedlessly tread on the line is instantly covered with hundreds of angry ants which bury their mandibles in his flesh. The bite, though not at all poisonous, is viciously sharp, and on sensitive parts of the body exquisitely painful, and so unendurable as to make the sufferer regardless of any-

thing except the immediate tearing off of clothing and the extraction of the pugnacious fangs. Yet, annoying as this little insect is at times, it performs a valuable service in destroying dead animal matter, and in ridding human habitations of vermin, such as other insects, and even rats, mice and reptiles.

But more than from dread of beast, or reptile, or insect, Ayĕnwĕ's heart beat with fear, and she hastened Ovanga's errant steps into an actual trot as she thought of the ghosts (abambo) that almost every adult native declares he or she has seen in the forest at night, and which the magicians, in their frenzied incantations, declare they see and communicate with. Doubtless their imaginations, aroused by expectation, wild with drum and dance, and crazed by hasheesh (Cannabis indica) or other drugs, do see frightful shapes that have to them the force of reality.

The little party were relieved when they came in sight of the collection of three or four bamboo and bark huts, built around a square in the centre of a plantation of several acres of plantain (Musa sapientum), cassava or manioc (Jatropha manihot), yams, eddoes (Arum esculentum), maize, squashes, sugar-cane, okra, and other vegetables.

The villages, consisting of low, square, gable-roofed huts, ranged on both sides of one or more broad streets, are built always on the banks of streams, for those natural highways are the only roads of the country; in the rear of each house there is a small kitchen-garden (behu), but there is not room enough in the vicinity of the village for each woman to have her several acres of plantation. The women, therefore, who perform the agricultural labor, all join in little bands to make their plantation farms a mile or so distant, in the roomy, uninhabited forest wilderness. And there they take turns, as Ayĕnwĕ was

now doing, in guarding those farms at night from the depredations of wild beasts. When Ayĕnwĕ saw the light of the camp-fire throwing its welcome towards her over the broad plantain leaves in which the huts were embowered, and heard the animated voices of the few other male and female slaves who had preceded her, she and Ovanga, with the mercuriality of their race, forgot their recent forest dreads, and broke out into a shrill song which notified the others of their coming.

They joined the women cooking around the fires, and began to prepare their own supper. This consisted ordinarily of roasted ears of maize, yams, or other vegetables, cassava-bread (iguma), or boiled plantains; tonight the fish which Ovanga had stolen made a welcome addition to the meal.

The evening passed pleasantly. All were slaves together, and had a common sympathy. It was night, the day's work was done, and the necessity for the night-watch would

not come for several hours yet. Together, but each family forming a company of two or three, they sat down in the open air, either on low stools or on the ground, around a basin of vegetables and the little iron pot in which was the fish, swimming in its own soup or nut gravy. The camp-fires flashed in the evening breeze and sent a cheerful light over the bamboo or bark walls of the huts, and on the broad, pea-green ragged leaves of the plantains; and nearer to the faces of the group, torches of the gum of the okumi-tree flared, with incense-like odor and sooty smoke. For plates there were squares of smooth fleshy plantain leaves, which, when the repast was done, needed no washing, but, flung on the waste-heap at the end of the street, would be replaced next day by fresh ones.

Very little water is drunk during eating, but at the end of the meal a copious draught is taken from jug, or gourd, or possibly a for-

eign-trade pitcher and mug. Mouth and teeth are scrupulously rinsed, and cleansed with the fingers, after the latter have been wiped on the one soiled garment that serves as dress, apron, handkerchief, and sheet.

Then came the evening dances and song. The few utensils and stools were cleared away from the middle of the street, and one of the men got out the tom-tom drums; these are hollowed logs, several feet long, but only from six to ten inches in diameter, with a goat-skin or monkey-skin head, on which the performer thumps with the knuckles and finger-tips, as he holds the drum between his knees. Another took a rudely made instrument, constructed like a xylophone, of resonant wood arranged in parallel bars of regularly increasing length and thickness. Seated on either side of the street were the rest of the men and all the women. Singly, or in pairs, they would step in front of the musicians and move about in harmo-

ny with the perfect time of the unmelodious music, accompanying the same with a weird melody, their voices varying from low rich tones to a high-strained falsetto, and the notes ranging through every register of the human voice. Their comrades on the seats joined in a chorus to the song whose words were improvised by the dancers, and added to the din by steadily beating their hands together or on their naked thighs, in unison with the perfectly kept time. The music, in triple time, gradually accelerated its movement as the dancers became excited, the men hopping and jumping about rather clumsily, but the women moving with graceful, languid swaying of arm and foot. The children ran in and out among the dancers, imitating their elders, or playing at hide and seek, and finally, wearied, lay down to sleep near the camp-fire. As one set of dancers tired, others stepped into their places; the drumming grew more furious, the palm-wine (alugu) was

drunk more freely, the song, steps, and gestures of the dancers became wilder, and what had been a harmonious combination of sound and movement degenerated into a rude revelry. The slaves' masters were probably enjoying the same kind of revelry in the village by the river, and as no necessity existed there for a night-guard requiring constant vigilance, they could keep up their dance until early morning hours and then sink into heavy sleep. But these plantation slaves, needing to be awake in the hours of darkness usually taken by the wild beasts for feeding on the gardens, voluntarily stopped at a certain time, marked by a few known constellations; part lay down to sleep, and the remainder sat up, smoking their pipes and engaging in snatches of conversation, agreeing to take their own sleep when they should exchange, some hours later, with the others. Those who were to take the second watch entered their huts, whose low eaves required a visitor to stoop,

while a person standing erect inside could touch the low thatch roof. Sleep was taken under mosquito-netting made of a cloth woven from the unexpanded and tender young leaves of a bamboo-palm.

The watchers outside lounge by their fires, vainly seeking, by sitting in the smoke, to partially escape the attacks of the mosquitoes. But the hours drag wearily. The excitement of the dance subsides into a quiet reaction; but with the stimulus of the tobacco pipe, and spasmodic conversation, they sit listening for sounds that indicate the coming of the wild beasts. If it is moonlight, the watchers relax their vigilance, for the wary animals prefer darker nights; some of the party doze, leaving a single sentinel standing in the broad sheen of the bright moonlight. But in the darker nights various beasts go prowling about; monkeys seeking ripe bananas, wild pigs rooting for manioc tubers, wild cattle browsing on the maize and mani-

oc shrubs, gorillas and chimpanzees feeding on the sugar-cane and plantains, elephants and hippopotami ready to tear up and tread down all these fruits and plants. When any are recognized—monkeys by their chattering, the chimpanzee by its bark, the gorilla by its howl, the hippopotamus by its snort, the elephant by its trumpeting, or by the snapping of the plantain stalks—the watchers quickly arouse the sleepers, and all, yelling, beating brass vessels, flaring firebrands, or aimlessly blazing away with guns, frighten off even the larger beasts. Rarely do any of these animals assault a human being except when they are wounded, or suddenly met and enraged.

But there might be real danger from the occasional attack of a leopard driven desperate by hunger. Leopards are numerous in the forests, and find as their prey the antelopes and gazelles. But they also daringly venture to the villages, and carry off sheep and goats

that have not been housed in the little stockade enclosures built for their protection at night. The small mongrel dogs of the country are also seized and carried off. Occasionally, the impunity with which these leopards thus enter the villages makes them audacious, and they attempt the weak bamboo or bark walls of the huts, and attack human beings.

But the great dread with which leopards are regarded is mixed with a superstition which teaches that an evil disposed person can at will assume the form of a leopard, and, retaining all the intelligence and volition of a human being, may thus be able to wreak spite against an enemy. Persons are found murdered in lonely places with the marks of leopard's paws impressed on the sand or mud in the vicinity. Obviously, these marks are the work of the knuckles and fists of some murderer, who escapes detection under the prevalent belief that a "man-leopard" has

done the deed. Fear of these brutal murders prevents natives from going alone or without a firebrand on a dark night. Lonely watchers at the plantation huts, particularly defenceless women, are frequent victims of such assaults. Constant quarrels and jealousies leave scarcely any one without an enemy; and as if the poison of the many deadly fruits, leaves, and barks, known to the native magic-doctors and capable of being secretly infused into an enemy's food or drink, were not a sufficiently safe or reliable instrument of vengeance, the pretence of the "man-leopard" is sometimes used to cover up a human being's crime.

But that night, in Ayĕnwĕ's garden, the clear moonlight gave no cover of approach for either devastating beast or murderous man, and when the hours for attack were past, she sank into a short sleep before the morning star should herald the coming day.

IV. VILLAGE SCENES.

When the morning came, and cooing, twittering, cawing, screaming birds, with their sudden sharp or united cries, startled the sleepers in the plantation huts, Ayĕnwĕ awoke to her daily work. Not briskly, as from a refreshing sleep, or, like the rising sun, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, but wearily, from her short, troubled slumber, and oppressed with the thought of the work that lay before her in the village, and the preparations to be made before her return thither, Ayĕnwĕ rose.

The native toilet is soon performed. There was to be flung aside and rolled up the coarse "grass-cloth" mosquito-net. The few yards of the same kind of cloth, that had been Ayĕnwĕ's day dress and night covering, were again to be tied about her waist. A few

handfuls of water were dashed over her own face and the faces of her two children, and then all were wiped with an end of the waist-cloth, used as a towel. Limbs, stiff with lying on the hard clay floor or bamboo-split settee, were stretched, with yawns; the embers of the smouldering fire were raked and enlivened, the inevitable tobacco-pipe was lighted, and, after a few whiffs, the remains of the last night's supper were divided with the children, as a slight morning lunch. Then Aĕynwĕ gathered together the articles necessary for her day's work in the village.

Cassava shrubs were to be uprooted in order to break off their enormous tubers, that grow just beneath the surface of the ground, and are a very important article of food in Africa. The cassava or manioc is easily cultivated. Pieces of stalk are planted, four feet apart, in oblong beds of earth about three feet broad and one foot high. Between the manioc beds beans or ground-nuts are often

sown, and when the bean or nut crop is reaped, the earth around the manioc is weeded, one weeding being all that is required. The plant bears drought well, but matures more rapidly when well supplied with moisture. In from ten to twenty-four months, according to the variety of manioc and the nature of the soil, the tubers, which are three or four inches in diameter and from twelve to eighteen inches long, are ready to be eaten; but it is not necessary to remove them immediately, as they remain in good condition for three years. When a tuber is taken up, a new crop is provided for by thrusting a piece of the upper stalks into the hole and closing up the earth around it again. In rich soil the manioc attains a height of six feet. The tubers are not the only useful part; the stalks make good fuel, and the leaves, when boiled, are used as a vegetable. There are two varieties of manioc, one being sweet and wholesome, while

the other, which matures more rapidly, and for that reason is extensively cultivated, contains a bitter and poisonous juice which needs to be extracted.

In Angola tapioca is prepared from the manioc in the following manner. The tubers are rasped, and the resultant soft mass is spread on a cloth, and rubbed with the hands, while water is poured on it. The starchy, glutinous matter thus obtained is left to settle in a vessel; when the settling is completed the water is poured off from the starch, which is exposed to the sun until nearly dry. It is then spread on an iron plate and stirred while the drying is completed over a slow fire, the little agglutinated globules thus formed being the tapioca with which we are familiar.

Ayĕnwĕ's next business was to cut a bunch of plantains from one of the huge, grass-like stalks, which, crowned with long drooping leaves, and supporting heavy bunches of

fruit, rose to a height of from fifteen to twenty feet. The plantain is larger, coarser, yellower and less sweet than the ordinary banana, of which it is a variety, and unlike the latter it is rarely eaten raw.

There were to be plucked bright red pods of the Cayenne pepper, growing abundantly on the luxuriant bushes that propagate themselves in the gardens. Gourds were to be gathered, whose hard ripe rinds are used for cups and bowls, and of whose seeds a rich pudding is made. A roll of plantain leaves and a bundle of pineapple leaves were to be cut, and the jug was to be filled with water from the spring.

All these different articles were crowded into Ayĕnwĕ's basket, which was strapped to her shoulders by a broad band passing over her forehead. And, finally, a log of wood which she had lifted to her head was balanced with one hand, while the other was left free for emergencies.

Laden thus, Ayĕnwĕ, with her two children, returned to the village. There, her day's work was the common lot of woman's household cares.

The manioc tubers, after being gathered, are set, in a basket, in a running stream, and left there from two to four days, that the bitter, poisonous juice may be dissolved out. The tubers, thus macerated, and already beginning to sour, are then thrown into a large wooden trough, and beaten with a wooden pestle, whose heavy thump is one of the most common sounds heard in native huts. The white starchy mass, with the broken woody fibres mixed through it, looks like dough. It is fashioned rapidly by the women's fingers into rolls a foot or more in length and two inches in diameter; these are neatly rolled within plantain leaves, and the leaves are securely tied. Then the rolls are piled in a large brass or iron kettle, into which a little water has been first poured, and the kettle is

tightly covered with plantain leaves. The kettle being set on a hot fire, the water is converted into steam, which, unable to escape, goes through the mass of the rolls, bursting the starch grains, as when hot water is poured on our tapioca. This completes the cooking of the rolls, and they are ready to be eaten with salt, pepper, and the soup of any fish or wild meat. Cassava, which is somewhat insipid, is not a perfect food by itself; it does not contain all the constituents necessary for the proper nourishment of man. When eaten alone for any considerable time it produces dyspepsia, and sometimes dimness of sight, effects which are avoided when this starchy substance is combined with oily food, such as ground-nuts, for instance.

Plantains are peeled, washed, cut into pieces, and boiled, like potatoes, under cover. Plucked before they are ripe, their starch has not become converted into sugar, and being therefore more nourishing than ripe raw ban-

anas, they are the principal article of food of most natives. The leaves of the banana or plantain, which when full grown are sometimes ten feet long and two feet broad, afford a delightful shade, and are used not only as cooking cloths and wrappers for parcels, but also for thatching huts; of the stems fences are sometimes made, and the fibres of the stalk are used for cord. Mr. Stanley tells us that the Waganda, or people of Uganda, on the nothern shore of the Victoria Nyanza Lake, form the scraped pith of the stalk into cakes which they use as sponges, for washing. The fishermen of the lake also make large shade hats of the stalk, and the poor peasants make shields of it. From another variety of the banana, which has a rather bitter taste and is unfit for food, wine and beer are made.

The seeds of gourds are shelled with the aid of a knife, or often only by the skilful use of a sharp finger-nail, or even with the

teeth; they are pounded in a mortar, or pressed under a roller, and a rich oily pudding is made from the soft mass, fish being incorporated in it, after the manner of strawberries in short-cake.

Cayenne pepper enters largely into every native dish, being mixed with salt and lime-juice. The African plant that yields it is one of the several varieties of the genus Capsicum, from which cayenne pepper is manufactured by drying the ripe pods and pounding them fine; frequently the ground pods are mixed with wheat flour and made into cakes with yeast; these cakes are first baked until they are hard, and then ground and sifted. The cayenne pepper or capsicum belongs to the natural order *Solanaceæ*, the same which includes the potato and tomato among its genera, while the true or black pepper is a member of the entirely different order—the *Piperaceæ*, whose fruit is a berry, instead of a pod.

A favorite way of preparing fish, and indeed any meat, is to cut it into pieces and securely enclose it in several thicknesses of plantain leaf, with salt, pepper, bruised oily nuts, and a little water. This bundle (jomba) is laid on a bed of hot coals. Before the heat has burned through the many folds of green fleshy leaves, the water, steaming and unable to escape, permeates the pieces of flesh, cooking them thoroughly, and carrying the aroma of the seasoning to the inner fibres, without burning or scorching. The oily nuts, melting with the heat, make an agreeable gravy.

Sewing is another of the village occupations. Sometimes the cloth is of irregularly shaped pieces of beaten bark fibre, derived from a species of fig-tree; but when it is of woven bamboo-leaf "grass-cloth," or imported cotton from England and America, the women bind the few yards they may possess with bright-colored edging (mekolwe). Thread

is obtained from the fibre of the pineapple leaf. The leaves, gathered from the plant, which grows wild, are slit lengthwise, and then, seized in the left hand, are drawn rapidly between a knife-edge and the thumb of the right hand. The fleshy part of the leaf is scraped away by the knife; and there remain in the left hand the thin, strong, white fibres. These fibres are used not only for sewing, but also for making fish-nets.

Weaving mats is another occupation. They are made from certain rushes, and from the long, lance-shaped leaves of the palm-like pandanus, or "screw-pine," so called from the spiral arrangement of its branches around the trunk. In a rude loom, and without any shuttle, the women, by hand, weave mats some three feet in width by five or six feet in length, making intricate designs of straight-lined figures, skilfully carrying the plan in their minds, without the aid of a pattern before them.

One of the two rooms of which an ordinary hut consists is occupied as the kitchen and common sitting-room, the other serving as a sleeping-room. In the middle of the former, elevated above the clay floor, is the household fireplace, whose smoke, having no escape save by the low door and perhaps a window aperture or two, blackens the roof and walls. From morning to night some process of cooking is carried on by the adults, either steaming cassava, boiling or roasting plantains, or stewing fish or wild meat. And children generally have some little lunch of their own to cook—perhaps an ear of maize, or some minnows they have caught in the river.

Beyond the regular morning and evening meals of the villagers themselves, there is irregular cooking for visitors from other villages, and especially for travellers from other friendly tribes. The host of the village is proud to set before his guest all his re-

sources of table furniture, in the shape of foreign-imported plates and cups, obtained in exchange for ivory and ebony; and all the service of his house, his fire, and his women, is employed to make the guest feel, literally, that the home is his. But the entire labor of such entertainment falls on the women, the master of the house taking the glory of it in indolent dignity, sitting and smoking with his guest in the public room of the village. Every woman in his house feels herself, for all purposes of hospitality, a slave.

V. CHILDREN'S PLAYS.

Days passed by at Aduma, and Ayĕnwĕ lost none of her restive sense of servitude. Whatever variety the seasons brought of scene, or food, or even amusement, for her, the short-lived pleasure was mixed with a memory of pain that kept too clearly in view the fact that pain was to return after the pleasure.

But for Ovanga the time passed pleasantly enough. His mother's master reckoned him as one of his own children, and though there was always a possibility that, in any emergency, he might be sent away as a slave in payment of debt, he was relieved from most of the actual labors of a slave. The master's eldest son treated him as a younger brother, and took him, as his little valet, on most of his hunting and fishing, and other

excursions into the forest. The labor that Ovanga had to perform on these expeditions was slight, and the free camp-life was attractive to him. Such occasions he regarded as holidays. Indeed, for him every day was a play-day, even in the village. Aside from the lighting of his master's pipe, waiting on his master's table, and other slight services, much of the time was spent in play with the other boys, slave and free, in the village street. There were bows and arrows, and tops, and boats, and bowling of wheels, to interest them.

Bows are made from any elastic stick, the string being either the strong fibres of the pineapple leaf, or the rattan-like inner bark of a palm that grows as a vine, running for hundreds of feet over the tree-tops. Arrows are splints of the common bamboo-palm like those used by the boys' fathers and brothers. The men use powerful cross-bows, difficult to bend, and their arrows, in hunting

wild animals, are tipped with poison. But the bows and arrows of the boys' play are harmless against life, though, in their mischief, they torture the goats and fowls in the streets by launching their random shots at them. Against the small birds that approach the banana stalks in the little gardens in the rear of the houses, even the small bamboo arrows are likely to be fatal. The practice thus obtained is a good education for the use of the more powerful bows which the boys have to handle when they become men.

Tops are frequently made from soft fruits by simply thrusting a stick through them; they are twirled by the thumb and finger. In the season of a certain nut, however, the "kula" tops are played by both men and boys, and great excitement often attends the game. A mat is spread on the ground, and the players, in pairs, pitted against each other like gamesters, fling the round nuts on the

mat, the revolution being given by a peculiar twist of both thumbs and forefingers. As the two balls whirl around in curves whose orbits intersect each other, the excited players call to their respective tops, as though they were living creatures. And when one of the two balls finally strikes the other and puts it out of its course, the successful collision is hailed with a shout.

A wheel, from six to twelve inches in diameter, and three inches in thickness, is carved out of the enormous turnip-shaped tuber of a certain convolvulus. Then the boys arrange themselves in line along a level piece of ground, holding in their hands long, thin, pointed sticks, poised as spears. One of the company bowls the wheel past the line, and as it rolls along, each one hurls his spear at its centre. It rolls on with the spears sticking out from its centre as a hub. The game is exciting; and it gives accuracy of aim, promptness, and agility, which come into re-

quisition in after life, in the use of the spear against elephants in the forests, and of the harpoon against the hippopotami in the rivers.

Boats are carved by the boys with their knives from a wood that, when fresh, is very soft, but which hardens in drying. As the villages are situated on the very edge of streams, at almost any hour of the day boys may be seen wading in the shallows, with their tiny canoes or boats floating down the current. Occasionally an eddy will carry a vessel out into deep water, when the owner swims to the rescue. The boys' eyes and hands, in thus fashioning the outlines of toy canoes, obtain a degree of accuracy and skill for making the larger vessels which they are to navigate in adult years.

VI. FISHING.

Fishing was daily carried on in Ayĕnwĕ's village by both men and women. For daily necessities a few stray fish were caught by hook, or dip-net, or speared at night by the light of a torch. But the great supply, which taxed the labor and skill of the entire village in catching and drying, was obtained in the three months of the cool dry season.

The central belt of Africa, comprising the region included between ten degrees north and ten degrees south of the equator, has, generally, two rainy and two dry seasons. The heavy rains of the wet months swell all rivers and streams beyond their bounds, and flood the low grounds. Back, up into the lagoons and ravines among the hills, the waters rise, and the fish from the main streams congregate in these new open-

ings to feast on the fresh grasses and the abundant insect life. As the waters begin to recede, the women build barriers across the mouths of the rivers and lagoons. These barriers are skilfully made of a light fence-work of saplings thrust into the bottom of the stream, and strengthened by intertwined vines. Over these is tied a matting of bamboo leaves, or the broader, but less durable leaf of the Phrynium. This temporary dam is too weak to resist the rush or sudden pressure of a body of water. But in this weakness consists the dam's usefulness, for the waters, in subsiding, find no difficulty in percolating through the leafy wall, which yet presents no aperture large enough for the escape of the fish.

Such occasions, laborious as they are to a few who have charge of the dam building, bring, in the end, a time of riotous enjoyment for them and for the many who come in at the lighter end of the work—a time of

hilarity for the whole village, and especially for the children, to whom it is a long feast.

An advanced party of women and a few men having built the dam, the rains having finally ceased, and the waters beginning to subside, the entire village of men, women, and children, leaving only two or three to guard the premises, temporarily emigrate to the forest, near the body of water enclosed by the dam. They carry with them their cooking utensils, mat-bedding, mosquito-nets, guns, and other implements of camp-life. There being no danger of drenching rains, the occasional slight dry-season drizzles (menyĕngĕ) call for no better protection than is afforded by the green branches of trees, cut daily and spread as roofing over the booths (mâkâ) that are hastily erected in the camps (ulaks). The huts are literally booths, the sides being entirely unclosed, open to the cool night air, and with no privacy other than that afforded by the thin walls of the mosquito-nets. The

constant camp-fires at night keep away wild beasts.

When the waters sink so low that they can no longer drain themselves off, but stand, a motionless pond, all the women, with kettles and gourds and baling vessels of any description, wade into the pool and laboriously bail out as much water as they can, throwing it over the dam. This is a painful and sometimes dangerous operation. The heads of the workers are exposed to a broiling sun, while their lower limbs are immersed in cold water; their feet are cut by sharp sticks or stones, or stunned by electric fish, or wounded by fish-spines; and their backs are wearied with bending backwards and forwards as they dip out the water. The quantity of water having thus been reduced, the entire camp—men, women, and children—rush in, and with scoops, hand-nets, and baskets lift out the fish, which are crowded together in an excited, helpless mass in the

contracted pools. This work is carried almost to the point of exterminating the entire stock of fish in that part of the river. In the case of small branches of rivers, they are readily and naturally re-stocked a few months later by the streams rising with returning rains. But in the case of lakes and small ponds, the natives observe the necessity, after such destructive draughts, of not draining the same water in successive years, but allow the stock to increase undisturbed each alternate year.

As each mother or sister returns ashore with bag, or pan, or basket full of struggling fish, she is met by the little boys and girls, who, at the edges of the pond, have been snatching at isolated fish which, hunted in the centre, had fled towards the shore. All this is play to the children, and they join the successful parent or sister, aid in carrying her burdens, quickly open and clean the fish, and gather wood for the fires over which the

fish are to be dried. Light scaffolds are erected on which the fish are spread out, and underneath is kindled a fire of wood whose state of half-decay prevents its blazing, but keeps up that constant smoke best suited for a drying-place.

It is a most animated scene, resounding with the shouts of the women in the deeper parts of the pond, as they excitedly thrust their baskets among the massed fishes, the splashing of the water by the cordon of men, who beat fugitive fish back to the centre, and the songs of rejoicing children; and all this varied by the screams of shore-parties disputing over the division of the spoil.

At night the work ceases, except around the numerous drying-places, whose dull fires weirdly light up the surrounding forest. When all have feasted on the evening meal, the usual dance begins, and women who in the day seem unable to work through excess of fatigue, forget their weariness in the ex-

citement and revelry of the favorite amusement.

At these semi-annual dryings a whole week is spent at the camp, and thousands of fish are dried and stored in crates, which, being taken to the village, are suspended from the roofs of the huts, over the fireplaces, for use during the subsequent rainy season.

VII. HUNTING.

A NATIVE African occupation in which the men are leaders, but in which women participate and children find an excitement, is the hunting of wild animals. This is accomplished by entangling the smaller ones in nets, and enclosing the larger ones, such as elephants, in a fence.

Elephants, like other wild animals, large and small, are hunted singly or in companies. But the capture of an entire herd is a wonderful feat whose initial step is an accident. The women, in regularly guarding their plantations at night, and in occasionally weeding them by day, may come suddenly on a troop of five, ten, twenty or more elephants feeding on the succulent cassava. Without alarming the animals the women hastily flee to the villages, and, summoning the men, return with

other women, bearing flaming torches. These torch-bearers surround the quietly feeding troop of elephants, which, dazed by the lights, do not attempt to flee, but with amazing stupidity stand and look at the fiery barrier. The men meanwhile rapidly cut down vines and llianes, which grow in profusion everywhere, and, tying them from tree to tree at a distance from the animals, enclose them in a circle embracing several acres of ground. Messengers have promptly been sent to all the adjacent villages, whose every available inhabitant, young and old, male and female, hastes to the scene. After a few parallel rows of vines, like telegraph lines, have encircled the space, from four to eight feet above the ground, the anxious cordon of torch-bearers retire from their dangerous position, and scatter through the crowd of newcomers, now gathered all around the circumference of the circle, which hastily added parallel lines of vines are making every moment

more distinctly an enclosure. But however closely the lines of vines may be tied, the barrier would be but a spider's web to the great brutes now wandering anxiously around inside, if they only knew their own strength. Intelligent as the elephant is known to be, it is possible that the African species may not be equal to his Asiatic brother, or that there may be a difference in the three African varieties. At all events, all elephants are wary of signs of pitfalls, or any other strategem, and, mystified by the sight of the network around them, they avoid it, as if it were a trap; or if they approach it too closely, they are driven back by the shouts and missiles of the crowd outside. If in retreating from any point, they rush across the area too near to the enclosure on the opposite side, the crowd there also drive them back.

All this while men, with hatchets and axes and swords and knives, are cutting down saplings and thrusting them into the

ground along the enclosing lines. Thicker and stronger pickets and posts and buttresses are added daily and nightly by relays of working parties, until so stout a fence is built that only a violent rush of the animals can break it down. Any such rush is guarded against by chosen watchers; and hundreds of loaded muskets are ready at a warning to repel such an attempt at escape. These muskets are very cheap flint-locks, imported from England and bartered for ivory, ebony and other exports. Though loaded with broken pieces of iron, brass, and other slugs, their aim is so inaccurate, and the powder used is so weak, that they are incapable of killing an elephant at a single shot. Lest, therefore, the animals become infuriated by wounds, and break away, the crowd outside of the enclosure refrain from firing on them until certain superstitious ceremonies of the native magic-doctor are completed, by which, it is claimed, accuracy and efficiency

will be secured for the guns when, on a given day, the entire crowd shall be ordered to shoot down their prisoners. The necessity for despatching all the animals on that given day rests on the custom that forbids any one of the slaughtered beasts to be cut to pieces and divided until the whole troop has been killed. This is to prevent quarrels and inequality in the distribution. Every pound of the flesh that is not needed immediately for food is dried for future use. And the ivory is exchanged for the wealth of foreign articles with which women and slaves may be bought.

During the interim of sometimes two weeks, while the doctor is making his incantations, the elephants feed on the herbage and branches of trees included in the enclosure. And if none of the frequent forest springs and rivulets happen to be in its limits, water is brought. Also fresh grasses are supplied; and plantains and bananas,

soaked in a certain poisonous drug, are thrown to the elephants, which seem to be stupefied by the drug, so that during their confinement they wander docilely and quietly until the day appointed for their slaughter. During all this delay the crowd of men, women, and children come and go to and from their villages, where they procure their food; they sleep around the enclosure in temporary booths. It is a time for excited watching, idle waiting, family intrigues, increased labor for the women in preparing food for the unusual crowd, and unrestricted freedom for the children in the liberty of the forest.

On the appointed day daring hunters, who have previously availed themselves of favorable opportunities for entering the enclosure, and, climbing suitable trees, have tied comfortable rests for themselves in crotches of the branches, take their positions. The crowd outside open fire on the now half-

famished and weakened beasts, which, as they flee from point to point, pass under or near the hunters' trees, and are fired on by them from above, fatal points in the back of the skull and nape of the neck being thus attainable.

In this wild slaughter sometimes a frenzied male, desperate with wounds, bursts through every barrier, and, treading down the opposing crowd, escapes into the forest, leaving the crushed forms of human beings in his path.

Notwithstanding the dangers connected with this mode of hunting elephants, the entire population of a neighborhood gravitates to any such enclosure to share in the final feast, which is held the day after the last animal falls. As it falls, wild shouts of victory are sent out, the gates of the enclosure are thrown open, the multitudes surge in, and dance in exultation around the fallen beasts. The doctor, with the chiefs, and the family

on whose ground the enclosure was built, and especially the household whose women first discovered the animals, in council decide as to the division of the tusks, and the share of the flesh to be given to the crowd of outsiders. The next day the tusks are removed, and each family represented in the assemblage cuts up and distributes the flesh. Then follows a busy scene. Those members of the tribe who come from a distance, hasten away with their share to their villages. Those living near sit down to feast to their satisfaction, drying, for future use, what is left.

Less dangerous, and therefore less exciting, but more remunerative, as a constancy, because a more frequently practicable mode of hunting, is the use of nets for gazelles, porcupines, and other small animals. Men with their guns, and women bearing great bundles of coarse nets made from the soft inner bark of a certain tree, go out into the

forest at favorable hours, accompanied by small mongrel dogs. The nets having been tied upright to trees in two long lines which converge to an acute angle, the men form a line subtending this angle, and, hanging little bells to the dogs' necks, systematically beat the low bushes. As the hunters advance, any enclosed small animals are driven towards the angle, behind which women are waiting to intercept attempts at escape, and where the dogs finally run the affrighted little creatures down. The men close in upon them, and secure their struggling victims.

A trap similar to this, and called "hopo," is described by Dr. Livingstone as in use among the Bakwains, twenty-five degrees south of the equator. It is employed by them for the destruction of such large game as the larger antelopes, zebras, buffaloes, giraffes, and even rhinoceroses. The hedges are made about a mile long, and the same distance apart at the wider extremity; in-

stead of joining at the angle, they terminate in a line fifty yards long, at the end of which a large pit, six or eight feet deep, and twelve or fifteen in length and breadth, is securely bordered by overlapping trunks of trees, and covered with rushes. The hunters make a circle three or four miles around the country, and generally enclose and drive between the hedges a great number of animals, many of which, falling into the pit at the end of the lane, are smothered, or pierced by the hunters' javelins, though some make their escape by running over their heaped-up comrades.

Another mode of hunting, less frequently practised, is to dig pitfalls, the earth being carefully carried away to a distance, to avoid arousing the suspicions of the wild animals, and the pit being covered with light branches, over which dead forest leaves are naturally spread. In these pits are caught antelopes, hippopotami, and even elephants—the

narrow space not giving them room to extricate themselves.

Daring hunters also sometimes lie in wait near the path that the hippopotami regularly tread for themselves in coming out of the river for their nightly forage on the grasses and gardens ashore.

After all such successful hunts the voices of the children in the Aduma village sounded highest in the loud and long songs of joy and triumph that welcomed home the women, bringing the butchered animals in baskets on their backs, or, if small, suspended from a pole carried on the shoulders of two.

VIII. RUBBER GATHERING.

One of the important products of the Ogowe country is the caoutchouc, gathered in the forests, and given in exchange for the foreign hardware, crockery, cloth, guns and powder, that reach the interior, after being passed from hand to hand by the native commission traders, who deal with the white men hundreds of miles down the river.

It is a day of great rejoicing when a company of A-ka-nda, or other lower-river people, come semi-annually with bundles of these goods, which they have received through the hands of, successively, Ga-lwas and Mpongwes, who themselves received them directly from the hands of the white clerk at the trading-house or "Factory" near the seaside. Each of the parties through whose hands the goods pass retains a portion as a "nyeno," or

commission. Only a small portion of the goods finally reaches the terminus of the interior tribe which actually does the work of collecting the rubber. The percentage that is added to the price of the goods every time they change hands causes them to represent a quantity of rubber great inversely as the goods themselves become fewer.

Such a day came to the inhabitants of Aduma. A company of Akanda people, after being riotously welcomed at the water-side, marched up the long street of the village, bearing bundles and wooden chests to the house of the native chief. The visitors brought gin and rum among their foreign treasures, and these were at once distributed by the chief to the gathered crowd of his people, and the evening and most of the night was spent in dances and songs of welcome.

Next day, before admiring and covetous eyes, the chests and bundles were opened,

and the chief, appropriating them as his personal property, divided them out on shares to his principal men. One of these, his eldest son, who exercised special control of Ovanga, gathered his share, and advancing, as part payment, rubber that he had collected on a previous journey, made preparations for another excursion into the forest.

After the visitors had gone, the chief's son, taking his gun, and laying in the hands of Ovanga, now about seven years old, a little bundle of food, burdened his own women and adult slaves with a week's provisions, and, accompanied by a few men, his chosen companions of the village, started on a day's journey into the heart of the forest, to camp in some new spot where the rubber had not been cut over.

Rubber camps involve more labor and are less safe than fish camps. In the former the party often sleep out in the open air, sharing with myriad forms of busy insect and

loathsome reptile life the shelter afforded by the dense vegetation of the tropical forest, into which the rays of sunlight penetrate but dimly. Far from a base of supplies, food is rationed out; and, as the days are spent in roaming the forest and collecting the white rubber-milk, there is not the time for play that children generally find about other camps.

India-rubber, or caoutchouc, so called from the name, *cahoutchou*, given to it by the South American Indians in Guiana, is the coagulated milky juice of a number of trees and shrubs found in Mexico, Central and South America, the East Indies, Africa, and Australia, and belonging chiefly to the natural orders *Euphorbiaceæ*, *Moraceæ*, *Artocarpaceæ*, and *Apocynaceæ*. The juice is contained chiefly in a network of minute vessels in the middle bark of the plants, though in the last-named order it is found in the inner bark also. The minute, transparent

caoutchouc globules appear to be held in suspension in the juice by means of ammonia, for the fresh juice yields in many cases a strong ammoniacal odor, and ammonia added to the juice will keep it from coagulating when it is necessary to transport it undried for any distance. The best rubber is obtained from recently-strained juice that is carefully evaporated at a moderate heat. Besides the elastic substance the milk contains an oxydized, viscid, resinous substance, which, unlike the former, is soluble in alcohol. The caoutchouc is valuable in proportion to the small quantity of the resinous substance contained in it, and rapid evaporation tends to prevent its formation. The rubber which comes from Para in Brazil being freest from it, partly, it is probable, because most carefully prepared, is esteemed the best, while the African varieties, which generally contain more of it, are less valuable.

In Africa, which, next to South America,

exports the greatest quantity of rubber, caoutchouc-producing plants are found throughout the equatorial regions, the rubber being exported chiefly from the Gaboon, Congo, and Benguela on the west coast, and Madagascar, Mozambique, and Mauritius on the east. Climbing plants of several species and genera are the chief sources of its supply, though in Liberia the finest rubber is obtained from a tall tree.

The presence of caoutchouc in a plant is shown by an incision in the bark yielding a milky juice which coagulates into elastic fibre on being rubbed with the fingers. The dried bark of rubber-yielding plants will show, when broken, silky fibres uniting the fractured surfaces; these fibres can be stretched for some distance without breaking.

India-rubber was long ago applied by the natives of the West Indies to one of the uses for which it is now in greatest demand. A Spaniard, named Herrera, who accompanied

Columbus on his second voyage to the New World, mentions, in a book written in the early part of the sixteenth century, that he saw the people of Hayti playing with balls made of the gum of a tree, and that, though the balls were large, they were lighter and bounced better than "the wind-balls of Castile." This is the earliest notice of india-rubber on record. Another Spaniard, Torquemada, in a book published at Madrid in 1615, speaks of a tree called by the Mexican Indians *Ulequahuitt*, valued for the gum which it yielded, and which the Spaniards applied to their cloaks to render them waterproof, though the substance apparently attracted no attention in Europe. French scientists in the eighteenth century drew the attention of Europe to the South American caoutchouc-trees, and pieces of rubber, sold at three shillings a cubical half-inch, began to be used in England for erasing pencil-marks in the latter part of that century; but

it was not until the beginning of the present century that the india-rubber industry really commenced. Since then it has grown so rapidly that the demand for the best kinds of rubber is in excess of the supply, though caoutchouc plants are found throughout a vast belt of the earth, embracing at least five hundred miles on both sides the equator.

The caoutchouc-vine of the Ogowe country is sometimes several inches thick at its base, and runs for hundreds of feet up trees and over tree-tops. The collectors climb the trees, tear down the vines, and then ruthlessly cut them off at their base, close to the earth. This reckless process kills them from the root. The whole length of the vine is cut into pieces about sixteen inches long, and these are stood leaning in troughs, that the white viscous sap may more rapidly bleed out. This milky sap is then slightly boiled, a little salt being cast into it, to assist in the separation of the gummy and watery por-

tions. The gum precipitates as a thick cream, and the supernatant water is drawn off. The gum is then poured out into moulds, a few inches long, or is, by hand, rolled into balls two inches in diameter. It soon hardens sufficiently to bear handling. It is kept wet, water being daily thrown over it, as it lies in a pile, or buried in a hole in the ground, or tied up in light rattan crates. There are several plants, besides the proper vines, that exude a viscous juice with which the caoutchouc is adulterated. The gum, as it is finally brought to the villages, paid to the Akanda or other visitors at their next semi-annual trip, and by them passed on to the coast by the same Galwa and Mpongwe hands through which the white man's goods are transmitted, has lost its original whiteness, being mixed with sand and sticks, and blackened with the smoke of the huts in which the crates have been hanging.

IX. THE CAPTURE.

In the enjoyment of childish pastimes and the performance of such light labors as devolve upon children in connection with the securing of fish and wild animals, and the gathering of rubber, Ovanga passed a comparatively happy time.

One day, however, his young master took him on a rubber-gathering expedition from which they never returned.

The interior of Africa is filled with petty wars and quarrels, and seizures and reprisals for debt, theft, and other crimes. There is no central authority, as of a king, even in any one tribe; much less is there any general rule over the numerous small tribes into which the people of the region are divided. Only in the separate villages is there any recognized power, namely, that of the "chief,"

one whom years and wisdom and strength of character raise in the estimation of his own immediate family and slaves, and thus give him a certain degree of authority. But no one chief has authority over other chiefs. One of them may have influence over the others simply by reason of personal magnetism, but not because of any real right that is vested in him by election, appointment, or heredity. Thus might makes right, and whoever has a strong arm and imperious will pushes his ideas of right to their extremity. When the strong arm and will happen to belong to a bad heart, the exercise of power does not stop short of the commission of gross injustice, but the man does literally what is right in his own eyes.

This general anarchy is made worse by a singular custom that prevails in regard to reprisals. If only the guilty were caught and punished, however violently and without process of law, there would be comparative quiet,

for those peaceably disposed and innocent of overt crimes would feel safe. But, in reality, suffering is just as likely to fall on the innocent as on the guilty. Indeed, more likely. For any man who has committed a crime is sure to flee promptly to a distant part of the tribe, or to maternal relatives in another tribe, and is safe. There is no military or police force to pursue him, and the one whom he has injured will not, single-handed, dare invade the village where the offender is being protected, or demand his extradition from it. The injured person thenceforward looks out for any members, however innocent, of the offender's family connections who may, in ignorance of their relative's crime, come, in the course of a journey, to a village where the injured person happens to be staying. Custom then allows the injured one to seize and retain as hostage for the surrender of the offender, or for payment of a fine, the innocent brother, or sister, or other relative.

In the case of high crimes, the innocent captives are not retained simply as hostages, but are either promptly killed on the spot, or sold away into slavery.

On this occasion, as before related, Ovanga's young master took him and a company of five others on a camping party in the rubber-forest. Unknown to the chief's son there was, in that same forest, another party belonging to a tribe hostile to his own, by reason of a quarrel that had been carried on for many years, with a succession of murders on both sides. Ovanga's master's party, in their search for rubber-vines, and in gathering the sap of such sticks as had been set up for drainage, had been observed and recognized, and as they returned, late in the afternoon, to their camp, had been secretly followed by one of their hereditary enemies. Returning to his own camp, the spy told his people of the proximity of the others, and armed a number of his men with their flint-lock guns

and rude swords. They came back stealthily through the thick forest shades—shades too dark for one to have ventured alone through them, and that perhaps covered the forms of leopards, deterred by the numbers of the party from leaping on them, as they would have leaped upon a lonely traveller. Ovanga and his master, with three men, an old woman, and a lad, were sitting about their campfire, smoking and chatting, thoughtless of danger. Their enemies, firing suddenly and at close quarters, killed instantly, or wounded, the young master and three others. The two wounded ones were promptly stabbed to death by the assailants, and the old woman and Ovanga were seized. Only one man escaped to tell the story. The little camp was plundered of its few weapons, tools, and accumulated rubber, the corpses were left stripped and unburied, and the two captives were led away. Slaves still, they were sent by their captors "down river," towards the

sea, to be sold either directly as slaves, or to be given in payment of debt for goods already received from the sub-traders of white men, who were not themselves directly interested in slavery, but whose negro agents misappropriated for their own purposes moneys entrusted to them for legitimate commerce. The boy and the old woman were separated. We lose sight of her. The boy passed into the hands of a young man of the Nkâ-mi tribe, a trader at the Camma seaside, south of Cape Lopez.

X. DEATH OF THE CHIEF.

When the news of the disaster to the party of rubber-hunters reached the Aduma village, Ayĕnwĕ mourned less for the murder of her master's son than she did for the loss of her Ovanga, forgetting that others had ceased to regard the boy as her child, and had looked on him only as their servant. Her sorrow mattered little to them. They gathered around the grief of the old chief, mourning for the death of the young man, his son, on whom he had centred his hopes for carrying on the honor of his family name. For Ayĕnwĕ to have sunk her own grief, and to have made her voice prominent in wailing for the young master, would have been politic. But, instead of so doing, she raved for Ovanga, and said bitter things against the old man for having allowed the boy to go on

that fatal rubber-expedition. Though another baby boy had recently been added to her, she was not comforted by the child any more than she had been by little Mawedo five years before.

Her bitter words were treasured up against her, and bore almost fatal fruit a few years later.

The common belief in witchcraft as the cause of death gathers about any native African death-bed surroundings that shock a civilized and Christian heart. African ideas of witchcraft suggest that the patient is dying from the malignant effects of an incantation made by some enemy, either a disobedient child, a fractious wife, a covetous brother, a revengeful slave, a spiteful opponent, or an envious neighbor. And if the patient dies, the cause of his death will be sought, not in natural grounds, but in the supposed adverse influence of some such enemy. So far is this belief carried that even when death has

been caused by an obvious accident, for instance, by the swamping of a canoe, the fall of a tree in clearing the forest, an unintentional gun-shot or knife wound, or the attack of a wild beast, the event is not accepted as a natural, inevitable result, but investigation is made for the apprehension of the criminal who has "bewitched" the canoe, tree, gun, or beast, so as to make the accident fatal.

Investigation is made by the oganga or "fetish doctor," a magician who, with various arts, fixes on some person who has in time past made himself obnoxious to the deceased, or whose apparent indifference to the death may be regarded as indicating satisfaction or gratification. Sometimes the dying man himself accuses some one or more persons against whom he cherishes resentment. Immediately, therefore, on the death of any one, or even before life is extinct, the crowd of relations, however distant, friends, acquaint-

ances, slaves, and any who may think that accusation might possibly be lodged against themselves by the oganga, begin a most demonstrative wailing. The utter abandon of this grief strikes an observer, not aware of its insincerity, most painfully. Voices are lifted in extravagant praises of the dead. The intense sadness that is thrown into the long-drawn-out wails of sorrow, especially if heard on the night air, leaves an impress on memory that no subsequent conviction of the unreality of the grief removes.

About four years after the capture of Ovanga the old chief died of the dropsy that had for years been slowly dragging him to the grave. A terrible fear fell on the tribe, and especially on his own village. The entire population of the place gave themselves up to the most violent demonstrations of grief. Every known funeral ceremony was practised. Men wore but the scantiest and most soiled and ragged garments; women,

and especially his widows, were divested not only of ornament, but of all dress; all parties, with shaven heads, sat literally in the ashes; at sunset and sunrise, and at intervals during the day, all wailed, praising the dead, and uttering their own hopelessness of ever again seeing any joy. The oganga was called by the dead man's brothers and mother, and secretly they mentioned the names of certain of the slaves and wives who had, during the life of the old man, rendered themselves obnoxious to him, or of others who were late in coming to the mourning, or who seemed to show little grief. With these names as a clew in the pretended search for the house in which dwelt the supposed witch or wizard, the magician, painted with colored chalk, with fantastic garb of palm leaflets, and loaded with amulet charms, raced in well-feigned frenzy, ringing a little bell, up and down the village street, and in and out and around the houses. People sat in awe as they waited,

dreading, each one, lest the lightning of his accusation should strike their houses and names. Acute in observation, he noted, as he passed them successively, those of the number whose names the secret council had denounced to him. He marked those whose excess of fear gave to their faces a look of guilt. Suddenly his bell stopped ringing, and his palm-wand struck a house, and in an oracular manner he described a person whom he claimed to have seen in a trance, and whose description tallied with the appearance of the occupant of the house. This person the oganga declared to be the wizard. The man was seized, and beaten and tortured. As usual, innocent though he was, he sought to lessen his supposed guilt by implicating others, and charged Ayĕnwĕ and three others with being his accomplices. Those three and the man himself were put to death. Capital punishment is often inflicted with torture, the condemned being either slowly roasted

alive, or mutilated, before the throat is finally cut.

The only ground of the accusation against Ayĕnwĕ was found in those treasured-up bitter words of four years before. These would have been enough to condemn her had she made herself otherwise obnoxious to her master's relations. But, fortunately, she had been, though an unwilling, an efficient servant; her still-retained youthful good looks appealed for her, and her life was spared. But the chief's family feared to retain in their community one accused of witchcraft, lest she should actually do, some day, what she was charged with at that time. The death-punishment was therefore commuted to sale into down-river slavery. So she and Mawedo and the little boy were sold.

XI. IN A SLAVE CANOE.

It was not long after Ayĕnwĕ's condemnation to sale away from what—house of bondage though it was—had been a home to her in Aduma, that a party of men, led by an emissary of the Oru-ngu coast tribe, appeared in the village, where, in the meanwhile, she had been kept in "the stocks."

Stocks are more or less severe, according to the offence with which a criminal is charged. Sometimes both feet and both hands are hampered; sometimes, only one foot. A hole is cut in a log of wood large enough to conveniently admit a hand or foot, which, being thrust into the hole, is prevented from being withdrawn by an iron spike driven through the log and through the side of the opening, thus closing the space to the actual size of the wrist or ankle.

To this log is padlocked a chain, by which the prisoner is fastened at night. During the day he can engage in various sedentary works, being at liberty to walk about, carrying his chain and log, somewhat as convicts in America carry their ball and chain, though they are less hampered than the African prisoner.

Ayĕnwĕ 's free hands were busy, though one foot thus weighted made it impossible for her to escape. Even had she escaped, before she could have found her way back to her own Bateke tribe, she would have been picked up as a waif and re-enslaved.

Slaves and prisoners in that country generally accept servitude where the lot falls to them, knowing that escape elsewhere would be, not to freedom, but only to some other master. Only in the face of death does the instinct of self-preservation lead to flight, in the hope that some new master's treatment may be less than death.

Ayĕnwĕ's life having been spared, she awaited with some indifference the expected journey down river. Her chief cause of anxiety was in the uncertainty as to whether she would be handed over to slavery in some coast tribe, or, as was possible, passed on to that White Man's Land of which she had heard vague accounts—extravagant stories of its wealth, and a horrid report that slaves were the food of the white spirits. This latter report seemed quite credible to Ayĕnwĕ because of the fact that some negro tribes near the Aduma were cannibals; and nothing in her idea of spiritual existence made it appear improbable that white spirits needed food.

The Orungu fleet consisted of five canoes; long, narrow vessels dug out of single trees, and capable, each of them, of carrying twenty people, besides the goods needed for purchase of food, and the luggage of cooking utensils and tents. It had not been a suc-

cessful trip for the slave-trader. He was constantly expending goods for the food of his crews, had obtained only some thirty slaves, consisting of men, women and children, and the favorable season for descending the river was passing. So, filling up most of the unoccupied space in his fleet with goats and rubber-gum, he led the chained Ayĕnwĕ, with Mawedo and the little boy, to the water-side, and placed them in one of the canoes. The mother's desire to retain her children, little as was her love for them as compared with her love for the lost Ovanga, was quickened by the possibility that she might be sold away from them; and she pleaded to be allowed to take them with her. Her wish would not have had the slightest weight either with her former owners or the new, if their own interests had not pointed in the same direction. The Aduma, taking advantage of their opportunity, asked an unusually large price for the two children, which the

Orungu was not unwilling to give, as his stock of slaves was small, and as he had given but a low price for the mother, the taint of a witchcraft charge diminishing her value.

Seated in the bottom of the canoes, the slaves floated down the river, on what might have been a pleasant journey if the chains had not chafed on wrists and ankles; if the stick that fastened back their arms had not made lying down impossible for the backs that soon became so weary; if they had had free hands, to hold up some broad leaf to shade them from the sun; if the crowded condition of the canoes, packed with boxes, goats, gum, and other articles, had not made any change of position difficult.

They floated down past the mountains that Ayĕnwĕ had always known, past the open prairie uplands of Akanda and Okota. They shot dangerous rapids. Sometimes, when the rapids, like falls, were too violent

to be passed, the canoes were carefully unloaded, and canoes and goods were all carried around the rocky ravines of the falls to the smooth water below, the captives slowly marching.

Past all these rapids, they came to the smooth wide reaches of the river in the Akĕle tribe. Then Ayĕnwĕ heard it whispered that they were not far from a white man's house.

They stopped one day, in the burning noon, to cook their mid-day meal. Instead of resting under the shade of trees on either bank, the Orungu drew up to a dry sandbar that extended out into the river. The absence of trees there obviated the possibility of ambuscade by any enemy. This was such a common danger among the native tribes that the crews of travelling canoes chose to lose the comfort of the cool dense shades on the river banks, rather than expose themselves to a possible ambush in those shades.

The Orungu and his companions relieved their limbs by walking about on the sands, or lolling in the shadow of a cloth hung up as a rude tent, while their servants of the party stewed fish and roasted cassava that they had bought on the way. Driftwood on the sandbar supplied the little fuel that was needed, and the iron pot and brass kettle gained in ivory-trade were the only needed utensils; river-water was at hand, and fire was soon gotten from the universally carried flint and steel.

A mile distant, on the same side of the river, on a beautifully sloping hillside that commanded an extensive view, was a trading-house, named "Aguma," because of two tall cotton-wood trees that stood at the water-side. It was occupied by a Scotch gentleman and his white clerk, with their army of native servants, and sub-traders, and their assistants, whose bamboo-hut quarters surrounded the imposing "Factory," like a vil-

lage in extent. This gentleman was on the very outpost of the civilization of the river, he and his clerk being the two white men farthest advanced towards the interior. Their life was sometimes overburdened with a rush of work, when the little steamer belonging to their Liverpool employers' firm came, quarterly, to carry away the rubber, etc., that they had accumulated. At such times all the native sub-traders were called in to settle accounts. Each of these had his boat's crew of from twelve to twenty men and boys. The combined crews amounted to as many as two hundred people, who, with drunkenness and quarrels and strikes for higher wages, sometimes made the white man's life unsafe. When the steamer left, and the boats' crews departed to their outposts, quiet came, with an easy daily routine of buying and selling that made life monotonous after the supply of newspapers had been read.

That day, while the blue smoke was curl-

ing from the noon camp-fire of the Orungu slave-trader on the sandbar, Mr. Dunbar was sitting on the veranda, under the broad eaves of the trading-house, the blue smoke of his pipe circling over his head as he rested after his own meal, and looked across the shimmering water and the rich green islands to the hazy distant hills of the Ngu-nye river eastward. Looking up stream he saw with his glass the collection of canoes on the sandbar, and, suspecting they might belong to some of his own people, coming with a supply of rubber, he started for a stroll, to satisfy his curiosity. There followed him his negro valet, carrying his extra pipe and tobacco, another attendant with his gun, and others still who fell into line in idle expectation, each having, as was customary, his own gun. The trader also ordered along, for company, a handsome Nkâmi man, one of his sub-traders, who had with him his own slave valet, a little boy of about eleven years of

age. They strolled out over the sandbar to the Orungu, who rose to scan their approach. Mr. Dunbar saw that the new-comers were not his people, and the Orungus saw that the guns meant nothing hostile.

The customary salutations were exchanged. Mr. Dunbar took in the situation, and his kind heart pitied the chained slaves; but he had no authority to interfere. He saw them eating their food unrelieved from their cramped positions, and some let their morsel lie untouched. Weariness and sickness and fear had taken away their appetite. One form particularly attracted his attention. It was that of a woman still young-looking, whose lighter color and more regular features would have made her noticeable even if a look of terror had not come over her face as she saw the white man coming towards the canoe in which she was sitting, with a little girl at her feet and a boy of four or five years in her arms. It was Ayĕnwĕ, who

now, for the first time, found herself looking on a white man. Chained, there was no chance of flight; crowded by other slaves, and by the goods, she could not move; terror riveted her gaze on the tall form, and on the face, flushed with heat and bent, from under the broad hat, inquiringly towards her. Was this, she thought, one of those white spirits of whom she had heard? And had she already met her fate, as a cannibal's victim? But no; his tones of voice were those of gentleness and kindness, such as she had not heard for many a day. And she overheard him talking to the Orungus in their own language, of which she had already picked up a little on the way down. He was asking the Orungu leader why he did not feed his people better, and why he did not ease their positions in the canoes.

The look of terror left her face, and, as she looked towards the other forms of negroes, her eyes fell on the Nkâmi and his well-

dressed valet. Suddenly her body, hitherto crouched over her little boy in weariness, weakness, and dread, drew itself up as high and straight as chain and bar would permit; her hands were withdrawn from her boy, and she strained herself over the canoe's side to stare at the well-dressed lad. Her lips were working convulsively with words that could not form themselves. Her eyeballs, as if they would start from their sockets to go where her fettered feet would have carried her, were telling what her lips had failed to speak. Surely she knew that boy's face! Surely she recognized that voice, that, slightly changed since she last heard it, was chatting with a fellow-lad, though the words spoken were in the same Orungu dialect that her new masters had been speaking to her! Surely he was not an Orungu! And yet, he was dressed like the Nkâmi and the white man. Had he lived with them always? She knew better than that. Those limbs

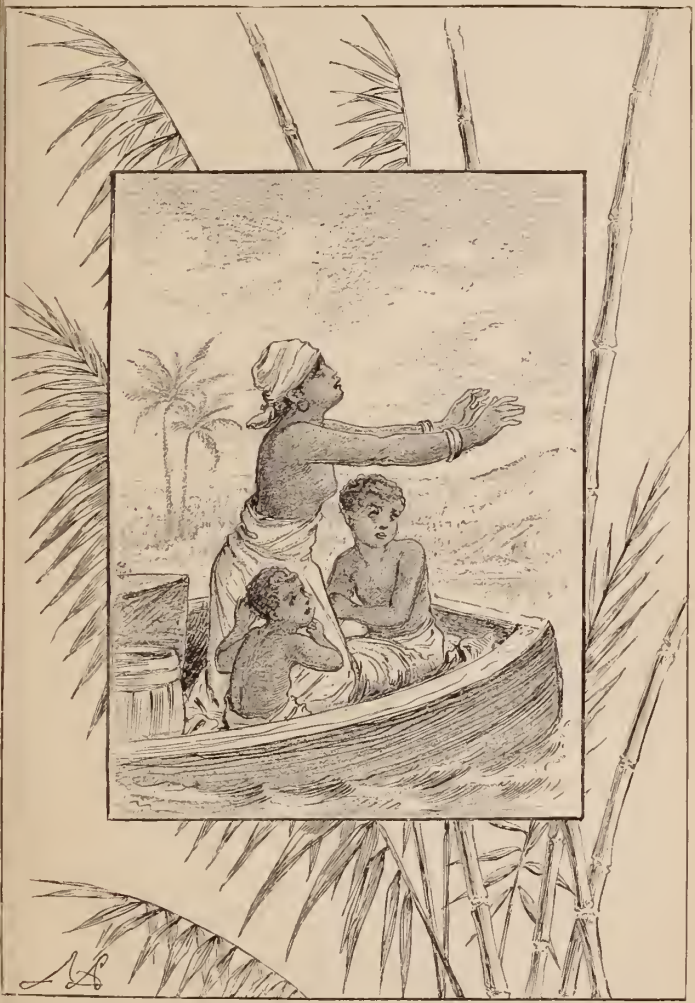
she had fondled in childhood; she had built her hopes of restoration to freedom on the love of that heart and the labor of those hands. It was her own Ovanga! She screamed, in the Aduma dialect, "My child! my child! Come to me, Ovanga, come!" The eyes of all had been drawn to her by her strange actions. And now, at her call, the Orungu and Mr. Dunbar and the Nkâmi drew near. She still beat her chained hands against her breast in dumb show towards Ovanga, protesting her relationship to him.

The lad recognized the woman's dialect, and, bidden by his Nkâmi master, advanced, startled and somewhat unwilling. He remembered that, about four years before, his name had been "Ovanga;" but his master had called him by a new name. He had been treated kindly. Slavery had been to him easy in its lines. He had abundance of food and fine clothes, and a constant share in the wonderful sights of white men's homes.

He had readily forgotten his slave-mother; and that scarred, wearied face and form, that struggled frantically in the canoe, failed to recall to him any memory of her. He almost shrank from her attempt to embrace him—her hands having been temporarily untied—for he regarded himself as free, and scorned the miserable slaves around him.

Ayĕnwĕ pleaded with the white man, in whose eye she read kindness, to buy her, that she might be near her boy. But he declined to deal in slaves. She pleaded with the Nkâmi to buy her; but his pecuniary indebtedness to Mr. Dunbar, rather than any anti-slavery principle, made him refuse. She pleaded with the Orungu to buy Ovanga of the Nkâmi; but the latter refused to part with his slave except at a price too high for the Orungu's projects of speculation.

Ovanga approached Ayĕnwĕ; his filial feeling had at last aroused itself as she cried in agony, "Oh, have you forgotten me? You



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are mine! I am your mother!" She drew him down to her, in the wet and reek of the canoe, and rained tears on his loved face; and he, in childish sympathy, gave tears in return; for amid all the kindness he had received in slavery, he had met with no love, and his young heart responded to that.

The Orungu became impatient. The Nkâmi had no interest in the scene. Mr. Dunbar turned away, sad for the pain that he could not relieve. Some rough hands flung Ovanga aside, and fastened the bar again on Ayĕnwĕ's impatiently-resisting arms. The Orungus reëmbarked; and Ayĕnwĕ, screaming, floated away from the view of Ovanga, who, weeping subduedly, followed his Nkâmi master.

XII. AT THE SEASIDE.

AYĔNWĔ's screams fell more and more faintly on the ears of the crowd ashore who stood watching the receding fleet of canoes as the rapid current swept them around the river's bend, and no longer heard by Ovanga, she passed for ever from his sight.

A two days' journey, down the long reaches of the island-studded delta of the Ogowe, past herds of hippopotami basking on the barely submerged sandbars, past the papyrus-lined banks, through the narrow channels choked with Pandanus (screw-pine), whose numerous strong outer roots, branching closely downwards from the lower part of the trunk and entering the ground on all sides, give the tree a partially uprooted look, by floating islands, among the curiously rooted mangroves, and out to the wonderful

expanse of the sea, brought the company of slaves to an Orungu king's town at Cape Lopez. Most of them, though scarcely able to move their stiff limbs, were marched to a slave-pen. A few, Ayĕnwĕ among the number, too weak to attempt to escape, were loosed from their chains, and, no longer rationed, were fed with comparative abundance. To attempt to return interior-ward would be useless. What home was there there to reach? Wearied with the journey, and dazed with the sight of the great sea and the winged boats, of which inland report had often told by the camp-fire, the slaves were satisfied to sit down in the present abundance, and commend themselves to their new masters by services performed at first in the village limits, and afterwards, as their liberty was cautiously extended, in the plantations across the adjacent prairie. On the prairie those of the men-slaves who were intrusted with guns made themselves useful by hunt-

ing antelopes and other wild animals. Some were taken by their masters and initiated in the art of sailing and fishing on Cape Lopez Bay, which they found more difficult than paddling on smooth river-water.

Ayĕnwĕ began to enjoy her seaside life. Her dread of being made, by white spirits, a victim of cannibalism had passed away, for she had learned the falsehood of that report.

One day, shortly after her arrival at Cape Lopez, a small vessel ran, under the strong sea breeze, into the shelter of one of the many creeks of the mangrove islands. Strange men came ashore in a boat, and it was said that these were white spirits. Ayĕnwĕ observed that they had not the fair skin and light hair of the Mr. Dunbar whom she had seen up the river. They were swarthy, almost as dark as some of her own people, but with long black hair. She heard them called "Putu," heard that they were the men who carried away slaves in their

white-winged ships to islands out in the great sea. She saw these strangers received as visitors, and eating and acting as other human beings; and Mawedo, who was rapidly gathering up the language, informed her that the free children, with whom she played in the streets, had told her that they had come, not for food, but to buy slaves to work in their coffee plantations. She saw the round pieces of metal, which she afterwards learned was silver, paid by handfuls to the king of the town; and the slave-pen was emptied, and its living contents were packed in the vessel anchored in the creek. With the darkness of night—to escape the vigilance of British cruisers—and with fresh land-wind and swiftly flowing ebb-tide, the vessel spread her sails and sped westward to St. Thomas and Prince's Islands, possessions of Portugal, about one hundred and eighty miles out at sea.

Relieved of fear, Ayĕnwĕ, with Mawedo,

now a helpful child of ten years, settled themselves to their recently shown tasks, and found an animal satisfaction in the abundance of fish that sported in the bay, and which, with little exertion on the part of the men, were caught in tens of thousands. The work of drying them, for sale to tribes farther north, was a constant but not oppressive labor. Sometimes when the tide was out, Mawedo, with other children, would paddle some old canoe among the many inlets of the lagoon, and gather from the roots and hangers of the mangrove-trees the oysters clustering on them.

Members of the Mangrove tribe are found on the marshy seacoasts of most tropical countries, and by their dense vegetation, intercepting the rays of the sun and promoting the exhalation of noxious vapors from about their roots, apparently are responsible for much of the unwholesomeness which distinguishes most localities in which they are

abundant. The mangroves belong to the natural Order *Rhizophorea*, which contains four genera. The genus *Rhizophora* includes three species, two of which, the Rhizophora Mangle, and the R. Racemosa, are abundant on the West African coast from Senegambia to Guinea, both inclusive. The R. Candel abounds on the western coast of Hindostan. Both of the former are also found in the West Indies and South America, and the mangrove extends even into our own Florida and Louisiana. Most of the species are remarkable for the peculiarity of their rooting and germination. Many wide-spreading roots shoot out from the base of the trunk and extend over and into a large surface of the mud in which the tree grows, and the upper trunk and branches also send down hangers which, like those of the banyan, themselves take root and spread. The The seed begins to germinate before it is detached from the seed-vessel, the radicle, or

root-end, of the seed elongating into a slender thread which often reaches and enters the ground from a considerable height, or if the elevation is too great the seed drops and immediately strikes root and develops leaves.

The spawn of oysters at high tide attaches itself to the hangers, and even to the branches, of the mangroves. Clinging there the young oysters grow, being, at each risen tide, submerged; and when they are finally grown they are easily gathered, with the water at half-tide.

This life of comparative comfort did not last long. One day there came a large boat, not like white men's boats, but made out of a single tree trunk, and governed by tall, stout, fierce-looking people of Ayĕnwĕ's own color, whom her Orungu masters received as visitors from the Be-nga tribe, one hundred and twenty miles northward. They came to buy slaves, and Mawedo and her mother and little brother were sold to them. Ayĕnwĕ's

natural good looks, improved by the good food and easier life of Cape Lopez, made her a desirable object. The Benga visitors treated her with some care, but she dreaded their harsh looks and manners, fiercer and ruder than those of the more enervate Orungus.

She would have preferred remaining in the vicinity of the Ogowe, for did not she remember that Ovanga was somewhere on its waters, only a few days' journey away? She had eagerly scanned many boats' crews that, coming down river, had stopped at the king's town, for she had hoped that Ovanga might possibly be in their company. If she had only known that his master was a Nkâmi, or what that master's name was, or that Ovanga was now called by a new name, she would have had clews that could have led to the boy's identification, though she would have been powerless to convey herself to him. It was true that Ovanga and his master, with

the Nkâmi's boat and crew, did travel the waters of that lagoon, on their way to the sea, while Ayĕnwĕ was there; but there were too many outlets and creeks for her to know or see all who were passing; and she never saw them.

Mawedo, with her mother and brother, for the first time passed out into the rough sea, the Benga boat barely keeping in sight of the shore. Mawedo looked in terror on the white-tipped waves that seemed like living creatures trying to grasp at her over the gunwale. And then the terror yielded to the deathly sea-sickness that laid its limp victims in the boat's bottom, regardless of discomfort, decency, or life. She knew not whither they went, but only heard enough to understand that they were going northward to some river. At night the Benga masters landed to rest and eat at Sangatanga. Next day, with the same terror and the same sickness, the slaves were brought to Gaboon

Point. And a third day of worse experience over the rough waves of Corisco Bay, brought them, weak from hunger, to the white beach of an island that afterwards Mawedo learned to regard as beautiful. There, on that same Kâ-mbâ beach, the girl soon learned to romp, gathering shells; and there, years later, was to be enacted for her mother and brother a fearful tragedy. Most welcome to the anxious eyes of Ayĕnwĕ and her children was the land as they stepped ashore, glad to accept anything in exchange for the living torture of the sea.

Ayĕnwĕ passed into the hands of O-songo, chief of Kâmbâ village, her looks commending her to him as one of his slave-wives. He appropriated Mawedo, at the same time, as his child. Giving her the position of a free-woman, he sold her in marriage dowry a year later, when she was nearly twelve years of age, to a friend, of the Mbi-ko tribe, on the adjacent mainland shore of the bay.

Mawedo cared nothing for the man into whose hands she thus passed, but was pleased with the free position given her, though to be a slave of the aristocratic Benga tribe, who looked down upon the Mbikos, was almost equal to being a free Mbiko.

Thus Ayĕnwĕ was again left with but one child, the little boy, now nearly seven years old.

XIII. A LITTLE WITCH.

On Corisco Island, where Ayĕnwĕ continued to live and work after Mawedo had gone to Mbiko, there were three mission houses, at intervals of two or three miles apart, in which were gathered boys and girls from the island, and from the mainland distant from fifteen to twenty miles. At two of those houses preaching was held on the Sabbath. The island itself had been selected as a desirable mission location in the hope that it would be more exempt from the common fevers of the country than the mainland. It is beautifully situated in the centre of Corisco Bay. On the west is the open expanse of the Atlantic, whose mighty waves thunder over the long reefs that stretch seaward, and fling on the snow-white, dazzling beach beautiful treasures of shells. Southward the view

is varied by little gems of islands, Le-va and Mba-nyĕ; and northward are the bold outlines of Cape St. John. Eastward, like a setting to this central brilliant and its islet gems, lie the green Mbiko shores, through which, into the bay, empty the waters of the rivers Munda and Muni (Rio d'Angra); the latter is miscalled by the white sailors of the E-lobi trade islands, "River Danger."

Though a year had passed, after Mawedo's arrival on Corisco, before she was married to one of the Mbiko people who lived at the mouth of the Munda, and though Kâmbâ, the town of Osongo, her Benga master, was only a mile from one of the three mission houses, where were a Girls' School and a church, neither she nor her mother had ever been allowed to go to church. In their rapid transit from the Ogowe to Orungu, and thence to Corisco, they had met only with heathen like themselves; not with native Christians, or even with those who in mis-

sion houses had heard of the gospel. At Corisco, in Kâmbâ village, they saw a few men and women, differing in dress and manner of life from the rest of the natives, and whom they had heard called "Klisâni." By them they had directly been told of sin and salvation, and a Saviour Jesus. And the missionary, or two missionary ladies from the Girls' School, visited the village occasionally, paid their respects to Ayĕnwĕ's master, and held religious services. But slaves were not often allowed to come very near to the chief's white visitors; they were kept at their labors in the hut, or the plantation, or fishing.

So Mawedo knew very little of the gospel. And in Mbiko there was still less chance of her being taught any truth, except for the possibility that, at long intervals, some one of the Corisco missionaries, on an itineration to the mainland north or east, including the Munda in his route, might come to the village where Mawedo was living.

One bright day, when the fresh rains had brought out new, soft leaves, and the fleecy clouds lay white against the blue sky, and the birds rejoiced with man in their returning freedom from the dull, leaden skies and chill winds of the long dry season, a scene was being enacted on the Munda beach that was not at all in consonance with the loveliness of forest and sky and air. A stout young girl of twelve years of age, stripped of her clothing, her face and back and limbs torn with thorns and seamed with stripes, lay chained to a tree at the head of the beach. She was silent and tearless, partly from exhaustion, and partly from desperation. She had exhausted herself in vain, frantic struggles of resistance to the forceful hands that had beaten and bound her. Hope of escape or release was dead. For there was no pity or mercy in any of the many eyes of men and women who surrounded her. They were quarrelling among themselves, not as to

whether she should live or die, but as to the mode by which her death should be accomplished under her sentence of condemnation as a witch. They were taxing their ingenuity in selecting from the modes of torture the one that should most gratify their cruelty. Some, the most violent, demanded that she should be instantly hurried to the water-side, and have her throat cut. Others, less violent, but more cruel, wanted to make a bedstead-like frame of wood, to which she should be tied in a reclining posture, and then slowly roasted to death by a small fire kept burning beneath the frame. Others would have tied her to a convenient post and gradually let out her life by the amputation of her joints one after another. All these were modes that were practised in witchcraft executions.

But the majority finally chose a death less painful, but more lingering in its approach. The tide was out of the river, and

down near the water's edge was a stake, to which the fishermen were accustomed to tie their canoes. To this the girl was led and securely fastened, a heavy stone being tied to her ankles, which were secured to the base of the stake; another rope was tied around her waist, and her wrists were tied to the top of the stake above her head. The crowd sat down at the head of the beach to watch the waters, which, when the tide should return from the bay, would flow up over the muddy shores of the river. As they sat there, gloating over the expected fears of the poor girl when finally the flood should reach her face, they sharpened her dread by calling up to her pictures of it in anticipation, and by taunting her with the acts that had led to her present fate. She very well remembered those acts. They had been intentional; she had pursued them systematically with an object in view. During the less than six hours that were to elapse before the waters would

rise over her head, the events of the past year came vividly to her remembrance.

When first she had been brought from Corisco Island to be married to the Mbiko, who already had a number of wives, the change to a new place, and a slight pride of position as the new household pet, had pleased her. But she was only a child, and the husband's older wives were jealous because she accepted the petting without doing any service. And the husband so soon showed himself arbitrary and tyrannical that she, never having had any love for him, or interest in him, deliberately undertook to make herself as disagreeable as possible, in the hope that he, wearied with her, would take her back to Osongo, on Corisco, as an unsatisfactory piece of goods. All this she had time to remember as the tide began to lap against her feet. She remembered how, when the other women had secured a beating for her by telling some lie about her, she had

avenged herself by getting them and other women into trouble; how she had secretly, when they were making their cassava-bread, thrown into it sand, which, as it gritted against the teeth of those who ate it, had aroused their anger against the women for their supposed carelessness. She remembered how she had introduced thorns into the bedding of those who maltreated her, and how she exulted to herself as she overheard their sharp cry of pain as they laid themselves to rest for the night.

The waters rose towards her knees, and the crowd ashore reminded her that she could not run away from the hungry waves as she had sometimes played truant from the kitchen, making searchers weary themselves in calling for her, while she was hidden in some nook near them. She remembered the quarrels she had produced among them by telling lies about one to another, and thus literally "setting households by the ears."

The salt waters startled her as they clasped her hips, and the crowd ashore reminded her how she had gathered chips of a fetid tree, and, laying them on their fires, had spoiled their food and driven them in disgust out of their huts. And then she remembered how, prompted by a hasty temper inherited from her mother, or by her overflowing spirits, she had done everything possible to make herself hated by her husband. Even while he was living, the towns-people had called her a witch; and she had well earned the name.

As the chill waters rose to her waist, she struggled with the bitter reflection that before her husband had been actually driven to the point of sending her away, her plan had failed by his sudden death from injuries received in an elephant hunt, and all her accumulated ill deeds were what had fixed on her the charge of being the witch who had caused those injuries and his death.

The cold salt waters laved her breast. But the people ashore were not now jeering her as they had been. She saw their eyes turned farther out on the bay behind her. She could not see what they were looking at. She observed that their curiosity became excited. She heard the words "elende" (boat), and "ikuku" (sail), and "utangani" (white man). Presently, from a side angle of vision, she saw, rapidly approaching under the strong, fresh sea-breeze, a white-sailed boat, which, as it came clearly into view, she recognized as the mission-cutter that, from Kâmbâ beach on Corisco, she had often seen passing on the sea to the A-lo-ngo house.

The missionary was on one of his monthly trips, itinerating, preaching, and collecting pupils, and in the usual routine was making a semi-annual visit to the Munda.

Mawedo turned her face upward from the steady, cold, salt wave that was gripping her throat, and screamed out the missionary's

name, calling him, in native custom, "My father! my father! I am dying! help me."

The boat, which was advancing directly towards the alarmed crowd ashore, deflected from its course, and anchored near her. A few words to the mission-crew explained to them her condition. A man with a kindly face leaped overboard, and, diving for a moment, with a sharp knife severed the cords at the girl's feet and waist. Then, loosing her hands, he lifted her into the boat, just as a fleet of canoes, manned by the more daring of her enemies, paddled from shore to protest against the rescue of their victim.

Flinging her a few yards of cloth to wrap around her, the missionary, whose kindly face and voice now changed their look and tone, turned to the would-be murderers. Meeting them with indignation and firmness, he protected the girl from their grasp, quieted their fury, deliberately bargained with them for her life, and paid them, in cloth, beads, and other

trade-goods, the ransom which they demanded. Then, after preaching them a sermon while standing, like Jesus, in the boat, he took the girl away to Corisco Island and safety. Mawedo sat in the boat grateful for rescue; and with eyes, ears, and heart opened, she listened that night, as she had never listened before, to a Book from which her rescuer read to her a strangely beautiful story.

XIV. LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE.

Mawedo was brought by her rescuer to the Mission Girls' School on Corisco. It was a new scene to her. Though she had often passed by the house, and had even sold eggs and vegetables at its door, had seen the missionary ladies in their visits to Kâmbâ and other villages, and had heard some of the schoolgirls, in their vacations, tell of their school-life, the whole was so outside of her life and knowledge, and her previous ignorance was so great, that she had failed utterly to comprehend any part of it. She understood only that schoolgirls were fed regularly, and dressed fully, and made to obey certain rules, which she thought restrictive, and taught about God, of whom she knew nothing. But she had been pleased with the sight of the pretty dresses, and she liked to

hear the hymns, some of whose tunes she had overheard in the town, though she did not know the meaning of the words.

So it was with a mixture of trepidation, pleasure, and curiosity that she entered the one little room of the Mission House that made any pretensions to being a parlor, and where the two ladies had come to receive her and her rescuer. The trepidation gave way before the kindly smiles of the younger lady, Miss Helen Cameron, who drew her to her side, and the motherly look of the more elderly lady, who made a record of the girl's age, tribe, and antecedents.

A group of scholars had gathered about the hall-door, curious to see and criticise the appearance of the new pupil. As Miss Helen led her away to the schoolroom, to dress her, and introduce her to the other pupils, Mawedo heard the girls repeating among themselves part of the story of her rescue, to which they had listened at the parlor-door; and she

saw looks of repulsion and gestures of scorn, and heard the words, "oshaka" (slave) and "nyemba" (witch). Such was her reception by her schoolmates. The resentment that it raised in her heart obscured the first pleasant impression received from Miss Helen's kindly touch and loving words. And an hour had not passed, after Mawedo had been left with the other girls, to play in their compound, before her resentment at the taunts and insults that were put upon her by them, led her into a quarrel that compelled Miss Helen to a troublesome investigation.

The history of that day was repeated on many days during the next few years. Mawedo felt herself an Ishmaelite among the other girls. All the tricks and pranks that she had played in the Mbiko village, she practised on her unloving schoolmates. Not satisfied with avenging herself for actual wrongs received from them, she was ingenious in devising plans to annoy them, until her pres-

ence in the school became an affliction, and the patient ladies were forced to admit to themselves that she had well earned her name of witch. However excusable her pranks on her schoolmates might have seemed to her when viewed in connection with the provocation which they gave her, she was greatly at fault in not restraining herself by some thought of the trouble, annoyance, and sorrow that she caused the missionary ladies. Yet she really loved them; they were justified by her even when they had to punish her. And she loved the school. It was her home. She could have run away, as some pupils did. But in Mbiko she was a witch; and in Kâmbâ she was at best only a freed slave.

Miss Helen's heart warmed towards the friendless one, and her own natural vivacity enabled her to look with some leniency on the girl's love of mischief, which would have been less censurable if it had not been direct-

ed by revenge. Mawedo was affectionate, and with tears would promise amendment when her gentle teacher persuaded her to kneel in prayer for Divine Help to overcome resentful feeling. She learned her lessons readily, and was, by her quickness, age, and size, rapidly advanced to the list of "big girls," in whom certain trusts and confidences were reposed. When, by some outburst of mischief or anger, she degraded herself from honorable position and from Miss Helen's favor, she felt her punishment keenly. She would go to her teacher's room, and, flinging herself at her feet in a burst of tears, would passionately embrace her knees, and, rapidly repeating one word, "sâsâ! sâsâ!" (please! please!) a score of times, till she was almost breathless, would promise, for the hundredth time, to behave properly, if only she were "this once" forgiven and restored to favor.

Miss Helen's human pity, that had re-

peatedly touched Mawedo's heart, her Christian firmness that rebuked and punished, and the self-denying love for others that, as Mawedo could not but see, pervaded her daily life, made a parallel by which the girl could understand the stories that she read and was taught of divine pity, and divine punishment of sin, and opened her heart to the divine love of Calvary. God revealed himself to our race in the person of the man Christ Jesus, and Jesus revealed himself to Mawedo in the life of a consecrated woman. The girl's eyes saw dimly at first. But by degrees she grew to love and obey the great Exemplar himself, as he is revealed in his Word, and as the Spirit increasingly revealed him to her heart.

Before she had been four years in the school, she had asked for baptism, and was received at Christ's table. Really a child of God, she tried to be consistent, though often her old temper would vent itself; but for

such outbursts she always rebuked herself more severely than her teachers rebuked her. Her worst fault was the untruthfulness that had been her constant practice from childhood. To lie was actually easier to her than to tell the truth. She had been accustomed to lie for no apparent reason; and the sin still clung to her, and gained an advantage when sudden temptation assailed her. But she generally repented before the untruth was discovered, and, coming to her teacher with humiliation, would say, "Mamma, I told you a lie that time."

As she grew older she became skilful in braiding the strands of beads of various colors and sizes with which the girls amused part of their play hours, and which their teachers encouraged them to wear as ornaments, instead of the heavy brass leg-rings and arm-rings required by native heathen fashion.

She was also skilful in braiding the hair

of the younger girls, an art that is practised by every native woman for her special friends, the style of braiding being such that no one can do it for herself. In school the larger girls often found it an irksome task when required to do it for the little ones.

During Mawedo's four years at school, she had little to do with her mother and brother, and the little sister who had been born about the time of her entrance into the school. The school routine purposely kept the children away from the vicious sights and sounds of the villages, but it did not at all forbid visits to the school by the heathen parents and relatives of the pupils. Rather, such visits were encouraged, in order that the children's relatives might see something of Christian home-life. But Mawedo's mother was so engaged with her plantation work several miles away, that any intimacy between her and her child was not encouraged by Osongo and his people. They pre-

ferred that, as Osongo had called Mawedo his adopted daughter, he should be kept on the school records as "father" and patron, and receive from the missionary ladies whatever advantage their words or their gifts might confer. Legally, he had no claim on her, nor did the mission, which held her as its ward, wish him to have any influence over her, or allow him any authority about her. As to Mawedo herself, she knew why her mother had so named her in her infancy; she felt that the best love she had ever known was that of her missionary rescuer and teachers; and she was satisfied. Her teacher took her sometimes to visit her mother and little sister, and sometimes she saw the latter in her mother's arms on the Mission veranda, where native women brought food for sale. On those village visitations, Mawedo, in her Christian zeal, sang to the baby some of the pretty hymns that she had learned. And she tried to lighten the hard

lot of her mother by a Christian filial interest more faithful than the slight maternal love she had herself received.

Ayĕnwĕ's pride was gratified by the sight of the well-dressed, handsomely-grown young woman, who was not ashamed to call her "my mother;" but she listened to the prayer that her daughter made in the low smoky hut more to please the child, in return for the little present of soap, needles, or other small commodity that was regularly placed in her hand, than for any understanding her own dark heart had of that prayer's blessed truth. Nevertheless, she could not fail to see, and to consider, while at her gardening or fishing, that the white man's God was worth serving, if only he made the life of his servants, like Mawedo's, lovelier than her own. Yet, if she had had the power, she would selfishly have dragged Mawedo down, by taking her to help her in her tasks as a fellow-slave. And Osongo's people often

troubled the Mission by trying to draw Mawedo away, notwithstanding that her Mbiko husband's payment of the full marriage dowry had extinguished any Benga right to her, and the payment of the witch-ransom to her Mbiko persecutors had left the Mission her indisputable guardian.

XV. TEMPTED AND TRIED.

THERE were other influences at work to draw Mawedo away from the Mission House, besides those that came from her mother's selfishness and her former master's cupidity.

By her four years' stay in the school she had grown to be sixteen years of age; a period, at the equator, which, in development of feeling and capability, contains more than those same years commonly represent in extra-tropical countries. She was a young woman, handsome, intelligent, educated, vivacious, with a full flow of spirits that made her enjoy life. The restrictions of school which as a child she had submitted to, she felt that at her present age she might be excused from. She was no longer simply a pupil, but was often employed as a monitress, or assistant teacher. But she murmured

that no salary was given her. She forgot that all that she was she owed to the Mission's care, and that the service she gave might, for a while, well be an unpaid one. A spirit of independence echoed the taunts of the Kâmbâ people, who declared that in rendering a service for which she received nothing but food, clothing, and love, she was becoming the "missionary's slave."

It may be that her mission friends were not wise in failing to recognize sooner that she was no longer a child, and in not giving her a satisfactory work and position. She had skill with her needle, at the wash-tub and ironing-board. Despising the small compensation which the Mission felt able to give her for this, as compared with what white traders paid for such labor, she began to work, at first, unwillingly, then disobediently, then angrily; and finally, in an unfortunate hour, impatient of control by a new missionary, who had recently become connected

with the school, she broke away, and, leaving the school, went to Kâmbâ village. There, left to herself, she would soon have repented of her hasty step. But, imagining that her first visit to the mission home, which she intended as an advance towards return, was received with coldness—a coldness which was really only a just rebuke—the breach widened between herself and her Christian friends. The heathen of the village took care to enlarge the breach still farther by reporting unkind remarks which they falsely said the missionaries had made about her, and with a reckless feeling Mawedo allowed herself to be led by her companions into undesirable society, among which were some members of the foreign white community.

Not only does every native man consider one or more wives as an indispensable accompaniment of existence, but every native woman looks to marriage as the goal of her life. Mawedo, at school, had seen that others were

given away in marriage, while no arrangements of that kind had been suggested for her by her mission guardians. She felt this as a slight. When her heathen friends suggested alliance with different white men, and brought her presents from them, she felt flattered and was not averse. She had been born and reared in vice; and while it was true that, under the Christian teachings of the missionary ladies, made effective by the influences of the Spirit, Mawedo's heart had grown purer, and faith in Christ was refining and sanctifying it, she still looked on marriage from a low point, and appreciated little of its sanctity as an institution of divine appointment, guarded by divine regulations. Thus weak in principle, insidious advances of a tempter would not have startled her, had one come to her in attractive guise. But she was true enough to herself to be above mercenary purchase. So, when a brutal captain of a trading vessel, in imitation of hea-

then custom, without the excuse of heathen ignorance of the law of God, literally bought her in a pecuniary transaction with Osongo's people, and came to take her away as his temporary wife, she recoiled from his touch, and fled into an adjacent village. Osongo's people followed her with threats, saying that she must go with the white man, since the money had been paid for her. When they attempted to drag her away, she escaped from them, and, like a frightened deer, fled to the Mission House, where, bursting into the study of the good old missionary as he sat at his desk translating the Bible, she threw herself at his feet, exclaiming, "My father! my father! save me!"

The surprised old man could scarcely get an intelligible story from her lips, so excitedly did she speak, between hysteric sobs and tears. By the time he fully understood, and had assured her of her safety, a note was handed him, ungrammatical, coarsely worded,

and in barely legible writing, signed by the white man, and demanding her instant delivery, on the ground of "country marriage" in right of dowry paid to her professed relatives. Two of his boat crew, powerful men, members of the Kroo tribe, which furnishes porters and boatmen to all the West Coast African trade, had brought the note, and stood ready to enforce its demand.

The missionary's house was partly occupied as a Consulate, and he himself was Acting U. S. Consul. Stepping quietly into his study, which he had left that he might speak with the Kroomen, he brought out an American flag, and significantly flung it over the veranda railing. As the starred and striped folds floated in the breeze fresh from the sea, he indignantly bade the two men tell their master to "come and take the girl." They understood. The enraged captain understood also, when the message was reported to him, and he dared carry his violence no farther.

Warned by this experience, Mawedo would have done well to return to her employments at the Mission House. But, after a few days of protection, when her persecutor had gone, the same influences that had originally made her dissatisfied with restraints led her to leave them again, saying that God was in the villages, and she could serve him there also. This was true, and she had not fallen into overt sin, nor neglected the duties of her Christian profession. But she was walking in slippery places.

Her skill in sewing, washing and ironing obtained her remunerative employment from the trading-houses, nearer to which she removed for the more convenient performance of her work. Thus she came daily into the presence of unscrupulous sailors, shipping men, and young clerks, who amused themselves in their leisure moments by conversing with the bright young African. Having heard of the repulse which she had given to

the rough captain, these others approached her courteously, in the guise of respectful admiration. She was gratified by their attentions, their compliments flattered her, and their presents of dresses were not offensive to her, in her stage of civilization.

Poor girl! she was only a foolish fly, being meshed in a web that would soon prove too strong for her.

She had indeed tried to guard herself. But all her associations were such as inevitably weakened principle and slackened her sense of duty. Excuses for absence from church were more frequently made by her; her Bible lay scarcely used; and she suppressed prayer in the presence of those who sneered at both Bible and prayer. Around her were other women who were leading a life of indolence, in the enjoyment of pretty ornaments and bright-colored garments, and the tempter in her heart asked, "Why might not you have the like?" and assured her that

she might have them if she would consent to follow one young man who had lately become more open in his professions of devotion, and for whom she felt an increasing attachment.

A marriage ceremony meant but little to her, for she had seen native men who had been married in the Mission House by Christian ceremony become polygamists by adding heathen wives, in native custom, and the Christian wife was then in no better case than one of the others.

Poor Mawedo's slight appreciation of what was due to and from womanly and wifely dignity, made her willing to dispense with a ceremony, if there were given and received undivided affection.

So when, some months later, the handsome blue eyes that had pleased her with their admiration, and that looked so true, pleaded warmly while their owner promised to love only her if she would follow him, she

followed. But, because there was no marriage ceremony, she knew that her friends of the Mission House condemned her. She stayed away from church, for she knew her name was suspended. And she feared to meet again Miss Helen's sad eyes, that had looked at her so reprovingly one day when they passed each other on the beach.

In a very little while Mawedo found that the undivided love she had trusted in so confidingly was not given to her. Bitterly repenting her mistake, and the heartlessness of the love for the sake of which she had chosen sin and disgrace, and alienation from her God and her true friends, wounded, and with a truer sense of what Christian marriage might be, she again, broken and humbled in spirit, sought the Mission House, craving forgiveness and any position, however menial, if only the sheltering arms of human and divine pity might again be about her.

XVI. A REVELATION.

HUMBLE as Mawedo was in seeking a home in the Mission House, she could not again be received into the same relations there as when she was a pupil. Nor was it desirable that she, now seventeen years of age and a woman in growth and feeling, should be put on the same footing as little girls. Miss Helen took her under her own care, treating her as a friend, and paying her as her personal servant. Mawedo waited on her when she was sick, assisted her when she cut out and basted the clothing of the school-girls, and accompanied her in her walks to the villages. This association convinced Miss Helen of the sincerity of Mawedo's repentance, and restored her former trust in the girl.

The Sabbath services of the mission

church were attended by most of the foreign resident merchants. Even those who made no profession of personal interest in religion came for the sake of good habits formed in their early homes, or in pursuance of kindly invitations from the missionary in charge.

There came to that region occasionally, as guests of these merchants, scientific men, sent out by foreign Societies to investigate the rare fauna and flora of Equatorial Africa.

One day there stepped reverently into the church a young man who, after the services, as the preacher stopped at the door to greet strangers, was introduced as Dr. Nelson, a botanist from England. His open face, shaded by a brown beard, his frank eye, intelligent conversation, and courteous manner, impressed all in his favor, and he was soon welcomed as a visitor in the little circle at the Mission House. He gladly availed himself of the liberty thus extended. For as he had sat that first day in the plain bamboo

church, his eye had fallen on the sweet, upturned face of Miss Helen, pale with a recent illness that had left her dark eyes more lustrous, and her brow fairer, under the brown hair that shaded it. A strong, rich contralto, that worked itself in and out among the harmonies of the tune, forced itself on his ear as coming from her lips. And this young man, who until now had been wholly devoted to his chosen science, had to confess to himself that no English cathedral walls had ever seemed so attractive as those unadorned bamboo walls that enclosed this lady's purity and beauty.

Acquaintance with her in the mission parlor only assured him that she was as intelligent and amiable as she was beautiful. When he wished for song, she kindly joined his clear tenor, to the accompaniment of the parlor organ. She responded gratifyingly to his interest in the botany of the region, as from time to time he brought her fresh speci-

mens of flowers. To his manifest though delicately-expressed appreciation she gave only a dignified acknowledgment, though in her secret heart she felt that this noble stranger was not unworthy of a woman's trust. His invitations for a stroll along the beach or to some forest scene were decorously declined, she instinctively feeling that, in that strange land and amid a strange multitude of witnesses, her feet should not go where her heart was not prepared to follow. That decision meant a great deal. Though he was a respecter of religion, she knew that to follow him would be to leave the special service to which she had consecrated her life. The reserve that she felt it necessary to begin to exercise towards him was maintained with a sense of pain, which increased as his love became less disguised.

Mawedo's keen eyes had, from the first, observed the doctor's admiration for her mistress, and her daily and nightly association

with Miss Helen made her more than suspect a reciprocal interest on her part in the visitor. The latter had not been slow to observe that the young native woman was the white lady's constant attendant. Mawedo, enlisted in his behalf by the charm of his unfailing courtesy, and a peculiar respectfulness which he naturally extended to herself, as one whose worth he thought demonstrated by her admission to constant intercourse with Miss Helen, was becoming curious to see how the more-than-suspected interest of the latter would manifest itself. She knew how heathen acted in their loves; she had sadly seen how some white men loved; she knew of missionaries' loving only by those who came to Africa already married. Here was something new. She said to herself, "This man and this woman love each other, but they act towards and speak about each other differently from any other man and woman whom I have ever seen giving

love to each other." Were there, then, two kinds of love? She had, when a schoolgirl, been gently whispered to about such words as prudence and purity. But she had not seen those words exemplified in the lives of other natives; she had failed to realize them in her own. She thought that perhaps she had not understood what had been described. But here was a revelation. Miss Helen was exemplifying what she had often inculcated. And from that time no spy ever watched more closely than Mawedo. She even watched dishonorably.

The doctor, unable to secure, in the parlor conversation, the private interview that he desired, and his respectful requests for a seaside walk being gently refused, was compelled to use his pen, and employed Mawedo as his postal messenger. His manner in handing the note to her somewhat revealed its character, and her curiosity led her to open it on the way. It read as follows:

"Miss Cameron: The guise of simple friendship under which I entered the Mission House I can no longer maintain. I pray you, grant me an hour when I may come to you for an interview. I wish to offer what any Christian gentleman would have the right to ask acceptance for of a lady the fascination of whose presence compelled his love even before he knew her name. Assent, please, to this my petition; and if you shall then deem it duty to return me these lines, and all else, unaccepted, I will not say that the assent compromised in the least your right to do so.

"With the respectful admiration of

"HUGH M. NELSON."

Mawedo's eyes glowed as she read the words. She had heard of many native love messages. But this was so utterly unlike them. So respectful, yet self-respecting. So complete in what it offered, yet so contained in what it plead for.

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She stood by, as Miss Helen read it, and watched the flush that came over the pale cheek, which the next instant became paler than before, as she rose and requested Mawedo to leave her alone for a while.

When, a few hours afterwards, she called Mawedo and put into her hand a letter addressed to the doctor, Mawedo was startled by the intense calmness with which Miss Helen spoke, and by the far-away look of her sad eyes, and the pained expression of the firm mouth, whose lips locked themselves after the necessary words of direction.

Mawedo, as she turned on her errand, had not the heart to prove traitress to the trust of the mistress whose look of distress had so touched her; she dared not open and read this missive as she had read the doctor's. She judged of its contents only from the doctor's note, which, when he had finished slowly reading the letter, he hastily penned and sent back by her. He wrote :

"Miss Cameron's decision that further pleading would be useless almost makes my pleading further unmanly. Yet I unhesitatingly avail myself of the permission for to-morrow afternoon—if for no other reason, to thank her for the nobility that knew how to be generous even while it bade me be hopeless. None the less admiringly and respectfully yours,

"H. M. N."

Mawedo read the note with a guilty feeling. It was a part of that new revelation to her; but there was still a mystery. Thought she, "This white woman loves this white man, but she does not accept him, or even permit him to plead."

The next afternoon the doctor called, and Miss Helen accompanied him in a short walk around the premises. Then he left, slowly and dejectedly, and she shut herself up in her room.

Mawedo, with a watchfulness that in its

closeness could be excused only by her devoted love for her mistress, saw Miss Helen sink in tears by the bedside, heard her pleading tones, and caught occasional words, as the lady asked God's blessing on what she had done, laid herself again a living sacrifice on the Saviour's altar, and sought the peace of the blessed Spirit.

Peace came. When again she stepped from her room, and took up the burden of life among her pupils, it was with her accustomed smile and cheerful words.

Did Miss Helen ever know that in that hour when she thought she was alone with her God, she had, in her Christian heroism, given the key to the mystery of a new revelation to an erring native sister, who, crouched against the chinks of the bamboo walls of an adjoining room, had, from very sympathy, joined her in her tears, and, witness of her conflict, had shared with her in her victory? Mawedo thenceforth carried in her heart and

copied more and more in her life a model of womanly love and purity, and devotion to Christ. She learned from Miss Helen's prayer of self-consecration why this white lady could give neither her love nor herself to a man whose honorable love was a temptation to forsake the path that she believed God called her to walk in. She began to appreciate that there was an earthward love that for the sake of the higher Godward love could deny itself, and, though suffering, be strong in the grace given by Him who pointed out the way.

Mawedo saw the handsome stranger visit the Mission House only once more, when he called to say good-by before sailing away to bury his sorrow in the pursuits of his profession, as Miss Helen buried hers in her school work.

XVII. BABY FINGERS.

"And a little child shall lead them."

VERY few of the white men trading on the coast were married, or, if married, they had left their wives in their far-away homes. But the captains of vessels trading in some of the more frequented waters occasionally brought with them an invalid wife or child, for the sake of the benefit hoped for from the sea-voyage.

Captain Holbrook was thus situated, and sought, among the mission girls on Corisco Island, an attendant fitted to be a nurse to his little two-years-old baby Alice, and also a companion for his gentle Christian wife.

The vessel was on its way to a port a hundred miles distant, where it was to lie trading for a year or two. Captain Holbrook, though not a professing Christian,

was honorable and kind, and the situation was a good one for Mawedo, financially in her favor, and comparatively safe for her Christian life.

So she sailed away, sad and yet glad, for she was going with the consent and blessing of her pastor, and was in the line of duty.

Not only were her busy hands serviceable with the needle and in washing and ironing, but her mind, well-informed, as compared with other natives' minds, made her an appreciative listener when Mrs. Holbrook read aloud, or described civilized lands. Her manners, refined by association with her loved teacher, made her acceptable to the gentle lady whom she was now serving. Her strong arms were not tired in nursing baby Alice, who, not being a very vigorous child, had wearied her delicate mother in her desire to be carried. And her vivacity found constant call for exercise in efforts to amuse the child so that the unquiet sleep of the mother

might not be broken by her cries. Her ardent, impulsive, affectionate nature devoted itself to the little one and to the invalid mother. The sea air benefited the latter, but the warm climate, despite the aid of the sea air, tired the child, and she grew weaker and paler.

In her devotion to little Alice Mawedo found a protection.

In the trading community whose members were coming and going among the shipping, were young men, who, misjudging Mawedo, offered her attentions which were to her no longer temptations, but persecutions. The captain was too busy for her to appeal to him for protection against his own employés; she wished not to distress Mrs. Holbrook by complaints to her against men who in that lady's presence were apparently perfect gentlemen; and her position as a servant had not the defences which civilized lands afford. In indignant silence she turned away

from unbecoming professions of friendship, and, clasping more tightly to her bosom the little white-faced Alice, said in her heart, "O Miss Helen, if you were here, he would not dare to speak before you, a white woman, in that way; you would be my guard. And you, baby Alice, your face is white like his own; if he touches me, put out your little hand against him; perhaps he will fear your innocence even if he has no respect for me."

Strong now in the right where she alone was concerned, Mawedo, in her intense devotion to the child and her mother, might still have been tempted to do wrong for their sake, might have stolen, or told an untruth, if she had thought they would be benefited thereby.

Part of the year was spent in the cabin of the captain's vessel at anchor in the harbor, and part in the trading-house ashore. Once, when thus living ashore, a favorite dog with her litter of pups spent each night

in the open space under the house. The yelping of the little dogs, afflicted with mosquitoes, was more noticeable at night than during the day, and disturbed Mrs. Holbrook's sleep. Too kind to express a wish for their destruction, she could not refrain one night from saying,

"Oh, I wish those dogs were away."

Her husband replied, "Certainly; I'll attend to it to-morrow."

"But don't have the poor little things killed."

"Oh, no; I'll only have them sent to town."

But the next day the captain, ready to promise at night, was too busy to remember to fulfil his promise. And when several nights had thus passed, and the lady became nervous with the annoyance, Mawedo could restrain herself no longer. So, secretly going to the captain's medicine chest, she took thence the bottle of chloroform, which

she had seen him use for suffocating the moths and butterflies and beetles that he was in the habit of collecting. Slipping quietly under the house, she chloroformed the entire litter of pups, and flung them into an adjacent reedy marsh. As she returned to her bed she overheard Mrs. Holbrook express to her husband her relief that at last the dogs had "gone to sleep." But the innocent lady never knew what had put them to sleep. Nor did anybody know next day where the pups were, as poor Flora went around wistfully whining for her progeny.

Little Alice grew paler and weaker. The slender limbs, that had successfully essayed to walk, ceased to venture to put forward the tiny feet from chair to chair. She wished often to be in her mother's arms, where she lay satisfied, one hand playing with the buttons of the lady's dress, and the other grasping the chestnut curls that fell forward as the mother leaned over her baby's face. Ma-

wedo, standing by, and ready—more than ready—to relieve Mrs. Holbrook of the loved weight that each day seemed to grow lighter, was glad to get the little one in her arms. Her position in her employer's family and in the community was now assured by her own good conduct, and she kissed devotedly the baby hands that God had given to be with her as unconscious but potent guides and safeguards in time of distress. When finally Alice expired in her mother's arms, with her thin fingers twined in the favorite curl, none wept wore sadly than Mawedo. And scarcely did the Christian mother, in her submission, give more grateful thanks to the loving Father above than did Mawedo, for the blessing that he had conferred in the brief earthly life of the little one.

XVIII. A WITCHCRAFT MURDER.

It was well for Mawedo's happiness that she was away from Corisco Island at her service as child's nurse. For at the same time that the events of the last chapter were transpiring, there was being enacted on the Island a scene that would have torn her heart not only with grief, but with humiliation, had she been a witness.

Osongo, the chief of Kâmbâ village, after an illness of a few weeks, had finally died suddenly. It was believed by the missionaries and other white residents that his brother Ajai, covetous of Osongo's possessions, and desirous of the chieftainship, had secretly poisoned him. But Ajai was the loudest mourner, and long before the actual death had been the most vindictive in searching for a victim on whom to lay a

charge of witchcraft. And he selected Ayĕnwĕ.

Since her arrival on Corisco, nine years before, she had led a patient, laborious life—not sullen or spiteful as at Aduma, not restless as at Orungu. Escape from the island was almost impossible, or, if possible, would have secured nothing better than immediate re-enslavement on the adjacent mainland. Conviction of this had induced quiet submission, and withheld occasion for those passionate outbursts of temper that had previously brought only harsh treatment. There was, therefore, no reason why Ayĕnwĕ should be charged with bewitching, other than that the knowledge that twice before in her life the charge had been laid against her elsewhere made her a convenient victim. Moreover there was not one belonging to the family of the sick man to gainsay her accusers, or defend her, if the former chose to sacrifice her.

Ayĕnwĕ heard from her fellow-slaves of the intention of Ajai towards her, and, with futile hope, she secretly fled one night to the forest thickets of the Girls' School premises, which, not being constantly traversed by the public, had grown dense. She expected to find some safety in the right of asylum which, even by the heathen, had been accorded to all refugees, from whatever cause, on the mission premises. For two weeks she lived a wretched life, hiding by day, and at night stealthily coming to out-houses near the school, where lived two mission employés, who though themselves relatives of Osongo, as Christians harbored and fed her. But they told her not to reveal herself to the missionary, lest the public effort he would then probably make to defend her should drag him into a personal conflict with her masters.

Search for the fugitive, who by the very act of flight had, according to native reason-

ing, indisputably fixed criminality on herself, was diligently kept up by her enemies. Having allied with themselves all the superstition of the whole island, they had actively been aided in traversing every probable nook in the entire forest, excepting the Mission Grounds, which hitherto they had not dared invade.

One day, just after Osongo's death, near the noon school-recess, as the native assistant teacher was with the girls in the schoolhouse, one of the children, sitting by an open window, spied a crouching female form making its way to the kitchen shed. The startled child cried to the teacher, "Moto! moto!" (A person! a person!) The form retreated into the bushes, and at recess the teacher reported the occurrence to the missionary, who with a heavy heart guessed too well who it was. He feared that Ayĕnwĕ's unwise act in seeking for a firebrand with which to make a fire to cook the snails she had

picked up in the thicket, would shortly lead to her discovery.

It was so. Ajai soon called alone at the school, and respectfully requested to see the missionary privately in his study. With well-simulated grief for his brother's death, and politic allusions to the missionary's formal friendship for Osongo as one of the patrons of the school, he humbly asked for a white shirt in which to array his brother for the grave, promising to pay for it in a few days. This being given, he went on to beg permission to search the mission compound for the alleged murderess of Osongo. The permission was promptly refused; but Ajai, on grounds that the missionary himself would have admitted in case of actual murder, deferentially continued to argue for permission.

Suddenly, a loud shout was set up in the public path near the school, and Ajai, recognizing certain words, jumped up—all his de-

ferential manner gone—and seizing the shirt went away with it out of the house, exclaiming,

"We 've got the witch now without your permission; and I 've got the shirt, and you sha' n't see any pay for it!"

One of the schoolgirls, a niece of his, had at recess told Matoku, a Kâmbâ slave employed on the premises, where the fugitive was secreted. And Matoku, with the traitorous cowardice that makes most slaves informers on each other, as a means of enhancing their own safety with their masters, had given the information that had brought Ajai and a retinue of servants. The former had hypocritically detained the missionary by the private interview in the study while the servants broke into the mission premises, and, led by Matoku, made the seizure of the half-dazed fugitive. Their shout was the understood signal that had led Ajai to so suddenly close the interview in the study.

The missionary saw Ayĕnwĕ being dragged away, tormentors beating her with thorns as she stumbled along. The discharge of Matoku from employment at the Mission House and the dismissal of Ajai's niece from school, the heathen regarded as but a slight punishment. The missionary's attempts to plead with Ajai for Ayĕnwĕ's life were met with undisguised admissions of Ajai's fixed purpose to kill her. With a family as prominent on the Island and as wedded to heathenism aṡ was Osongo's, and in the face of the current that set against Ayĕnwĕ, the influences that the missionary was able to employ, and which had at other times resulted in saving the lives of those accused of witchcraft, proved ineffectual, and he sadly returned to his house, baffled. A Christian native told him that Ayĕnwĕ was to be put in a boat and murdered at sea, so as to prevent any interference that it was thought the white man might possibly attempt.

With a spy-glass, the missionary saw a native boat shoot rapidly out from beyond a point of land half a mile distant. The rowers rested on their oars when they had reached deep water, and he saw poor Ayĕnwĕ cast lifeless into the sea.

He did not see another tragedy that at the same time was being enacted on the beach behind the point. Ayĕnwĕ's son was now a stout lad of fourteen, and Ajai, fearing that he would live to avenge his mother's murder, had ordered him also to be killed as an accomplice with her. The lad was seized, his hands and limbs were tied, and he too was cruelly put to death on the beach.

His little sister, seven years old, was not a witness of her brother's or her mother's death. Treated with some degree of kindness, but carefully guarded by an old woman, who thenceforth was accepted as her adoptive mother, the child was allowed to live,

her sex making her valuable as a servant and available as a future wife.

A native Christian, who stood, a pitying but helpless eye-witness of the scene, afterwards told the missionary that Ayĕnwĕ, as she walked to the boat, led and forced forward by strong arms, seeing his merciful eye, cried to him by name, saying,

"I am dying! What shall I do?"

Perhaps her question was an aimless one, uttered at random. Perhaps she thought only of her earthly life. The Christian had time only to say, as she was hurried past, "Call on Jesus!"

Ayĕnwĕ, though all her life a believer in feticism,* had never practised witchcraft and

* Feticism has been briefly defined as the doctrine that spirits are "embodied in, or attached to, or convey influence through, certain material objects," which may be either natural, as, for instance, a particular tree or animal or stone, or artificial. A Guinea negro, when about to enter upon some undertaking, will generally choose some object upon which his eye first rests on starting forth, and vow to worship it as his god if he be successful; if he fail, he rejects the

was innocent of any attempt at murder. She knew who Jesus was. She had heard Mawedo tell of his birth and life and death. As the poor woman stood by the water's edge while her ankles were being bound, she tore away with her yet free hands the only fetish that was hanging about her neck, and having flung it into the sea, extended her arms in prayer heavenward, saying with streaming eyes,

"This thing is of no use. I walk in darkness. O Jesus, God of my child, if thou canst help me, help me!"

God hears prayer. Did he not hear? Did he not answer? Did he not save?

chosen object with abuse. Fetishes which in the owner's view have proved propitious and efficacious are cherished with devotion.

XIX. A NEW PATH.

The two years' cruise, on which Mawedo's English employer was engaged, was about to close, and she was soon to part from the lady who had been so truly a friend, and who, since the death of little Alice, had treated the child's devoted nurse almost as an adopted daughter.

Mrs. Holbrook wished to arrange comfortably for Mawedo's future, who, now about twenty-one years of age, could not expect to go back to her Mission House friends for support. The lady therefore judiciously and delicately encouraged a growing tenderness which, she was pleased to observe, Mawedo manifested to the honorable advances of one of the captain's native traders, a young man who, though not a professing Christian, had been to some extent educated in the Gaboon

Boys' School, and who by his good conduct commended himself to the esteem of all with whom he dealt.

Mawedo's experience and strengthened principles made her shun attentions from any man, until she had, with a filial feeling, referred him for endorsement to the captain and his wife. These two, satisfied of the young man's sincerity and business ability, heartily recommended him. Mawedo's affectionate nature was then ready to respond to his earnest and manly proposal.

Her prospect of marriage led her over a very new path. Never before had she felt the self-respect or been treated with the esteem that came to her in the path that led to Christian marriage. She seemed to herself to be invested with something like the dignity that belonged to married missionary ladies, but which Mawedo had imagined pertained to them as white women, members of a race different from hers. Her eyes were

now fully opened to the fact that that dignity could be hers as well, in right of her Christian womanhood, and regardless of race.

The services of an adjacent missionary were engaged, and Mawedo, adorned, and furnished, as to her well-filled travelling chest, by the generosity of the captain and his wife, sat down as a bride to an abundant feast, provided by the same kind patrons. Appreciation of the higher social level to which she saw her new position lifted her made her more deeply grateful for the Christianity that had ennobled her life, more earnest in her secret prayer for strength to serve the divine Redeemer who had called her out of heathen bondage. This gratitude and loyalty to Christ, irrespective of the love and admiration that her husband inspired, were enough to make sure the vows she had taken of fidelity as a wife.

When, shortly afterwards, the captain

closed his trade and returned to England, Mawedo's husband took her with him to the Gaboon, to seek employment in some of the avenues of commerce up the many new rivers that were being opened along that estuary, and in the delta of the Ogowe.

XX. A BROTHER INDEED.

The Mission Church at Gaboon had its religious meetings at different hours, to suit the convenience of different classes of the congregation. Some of the prayer-meetings were conducted by missionaries, and others only by native members. At those attended only by native Christians there was less restriction in the range of topics discussed, and more readiness to speak, on the part of both men and women.

Mawedo, living in an adjacent village during the year that her husband was employed in one of the trading-houses, was a regular attendant at these meetings. Whatever her own origin might have been, the position of her husband's family insured her a cordial reception in the community. And in the narrow limits of the church brother-

hood very little time was required to make acquaintance, especially for one who, like herself, had been a pupil in another part of that mission field. Missionaries and church members all heartily welcomed her, and invited her to visit at their houses as a sister.

Conversations in the different homes, and the revelations of personal experiences in the prayer-meetings, often brought out strange histories and remarkable providential dealings. A man about twenty-four years of age, an assistant in the school, spoke one evening on the value of Christian fellowship, particularly for those who, like himself, were without known relatives in the world. He admitted a fact that he did not like to speak of in the presence of strangers, who supposed him a born member of the proud Mpongwe tribe—namely, that he was a Mpongwe only by adoption. He could remember coming, as a child, from a tribe on the Ogowe river,

and regretted that he had no knowledge of what had become of his mother and little sister, whom he could barely recall.

Mawedo's curiosity was aroused, for she herself remembered the Ogowe river, and had heard her mother speak of a lost elder son. After the meeting Mawedo asked the man his mother's name, and was startled when he said, "Ayĕnwĕ." It was not proof positive of the identity of their family that the name was the same as that of her mother, nor did it argue against identity that the man's name was not Ovanga, for natives often change their given names several times between infancy and old age. Under the impulse of something better than mere curiosity, the two, looking into each other's eyes with a new hope, sat down in a hut, and, around the night fire, with a few friends, gathered up the threads of their personal history from childhood. The man told of childhood's plays far up the Ogowe; he

scarcely could remember whether his mother's husband was his father or his master. He said that his young master had been murdered, and that he himself had been sold into captivity down river to a man of the Nkâmi tribe; that one day he had seen a fleet of slave canoes, and in one of them a chained woman whom he with difficulty recognized as his mother; with a little girl and boy she had soon been carried on down river, and he had known nothing further of them; that the Nkâmi man had left him as a "pawn" in the hands of a white man on the Fernando Vaz mouth of the Ogowe, in payment for a trade debt; that he had never been redeemed by the Nkâmi, and that the white man, not liking to seem to hold slaves, had placed him and other pawns at school as wards of the Mission, which, to justify itself before the public, had had free papers made for them by the French government; that he had grown up as a pupil, was con-

verted, and now served as assistant in the school.

Mawedo barely waited for the close of the recital to throw herself into her brother's arms, and there, while with fraternal feeling he responded to her affectionate embrace, she added, from her own childhood's memories, links to his chain of identity. She told him that her mother had spoken to her of an older brother who had gone out hunting with his master and had never come back; that while sitting with her mother and infant brother in a slave canoe by a sandbar in the Ogowe river, she had seen her mother weep over a boy whom she claimed as her lost child; and that they had passed on, and had never heard of him again. Mawedo's own years, calculated at about twenty-two, coincided with the age of the little girl whom Ovanga remembered. Reciprocally assured that they were the children of poor Ayĕnwĕ, they claimed each other as brother and sis-

ter—the more gladly because each had supposed that the other was dead, and the more thankfully because they found each other alive in Christ. Tearfully they went over afterwards, when they were by themselves, what they had heard from others of the tragic fate of their mother and younger brother, comforting themselves with the hope that sprang from Ayĕnwĕ's dying prayer.

The brother and sister visited Corisco and made inquiry for their ten-years-old little sister. But they almost regretted that they had followed her up, for they returned from their errand saddened by finding that the child made no response to their offered love, was estranged from their mother's memory, regarded herself as a native Benga, and seemed satisfied with her surroundings. The Kâmbâ women had wisely treated the child as their own after Ayĕnwĕ's murder, and the poor mother was remembered by the daughter—if indeed she thought of her at all—as a

criminal, connection with whom was disgraceful. She willingly found escape from unkind taunts of playmates in accepting the claim of the old Benga woman with whom she lived, that she was her real mother. Under the inspiration of this Benga guardian's jealousy the girl did not respond to her sister's kindly messages, sent from time to time. Mawedo therefore ceased to send them, but clung the more closely to the brother who was so truly hers.

XXI. CARRYING THE LIGHT.

MAWEDO's husband was commissioned by his employer to travel up the Ogowe river with a large stock of goods, for carrying on a trade with the villages located on the banks of the numerous affluents to the main stream. Establishing himself at a certain place, and building a comfortable bamboo house there, he thence journeyed all through the region, within a radius of fifty miles, in a large canoe manned by a dozen stout young men. Enlivening was the sight of the long, sharp-bowed canoe working its way slowly against the current, or flying down with it, propelled by the regular strokes of a half-dozen pairs of paddles moving in unison with the boat-songs of the crew. Sometimes the music echoed through the solemn forests on the banks, or floated over wide reaches of the

island-studded river, where for miles there were no witnesses or listeners other than the hippopotami snorting defiance, or the wild fowl screaming, or the monkeys chattering—all of them startled at the report of guns that sought among them a feast. The stern of the canoe was well roofed over, so as to form a small bamboo-thatch house that protected the trader and his especial friends, and the French flag fluttered before the admiring eyes of the villagers on the banks.

Mawedo had followed her husband in his river-life, and often accompanied him on these journeys, though generally she was left in charge of his house and goods during his absence. No other professing Christian was near her, but she had a calendar of the days, checked off each day as it passed, and kept the Sabbaths as they came around. She alone *made* the little centre of Sabbath air and Sabbath influence wherever she happened to be. The heathen knew of no such

day, and hunted and fished and worked on it as on all other days. But her influence induced her husband to close his storeroom on that day; and, dressed in clean clothing, they sat under the broad eaves of the house, or in the shade of the trees on the river bank, with books or pictures or conversation. It was a lonely, tempted life. She could not always govern the character of her husband's amusements or conversation. But she did induce a Sabbath quiet. And she persuaded some of the village children to intermit their plays long enough to listen to her descriptions of the Bible pictures she had brought with her. These, with readings from the Bible and the singing of Christian hymns, every Sabbath told the story of Jesus in an impromptu Sabbath-school. If Mawedo was on a journey with her husband, and he refrained, at her wish, from travelling on the Sabbath, remaining over at whatever village they had come to on Saturday evening, she

let her light shine by some Bible reading or story of pictures, that relieved the tedium of idly waiting, and left in the memory of the children, and even of the adults of the village, some impress of the name of Jesus.

That which her husband at first assented to under constraint of the memory of what he himself had been taught in the Mission School, and also for the sake of her wish, in regard to the outward observance of the Sabbath and other Christian proprieties, he was in time impelled, by the winning consistency of Mawedo's life, to choose as in itself preferable.

He was but an indifferent reader of English, having been only a comparatively short while in school, during which time he had been taught through the medium of native translations. Influenced by the native view of the relations of the sexes, many men, desirous of being taught, would have felt it a disgrace to submit to a wife as a teacher. But

Mawedo's husband had risen above such low views sufficiently to place himself before her as a pupil; and he found in her a loving and capable teacher. He had left off the habit of prayer which school custom had established; but Mawedo, regular in her morning and evening devotions, led him to kneel with her at their little family altar every night.

His good principles, inculcated at school, together with his manly self-respect, had kept him from heathenish vices. But in prosecuting his business he dealt in—though rarely himself drinking—the intoxicating liquors imported by his employer, which the competition of others seemed to him to require that he also should furnish in trade. This distressed Mawedo. It was nothing new to her. Captain Holbrook had used liquor in his trade, and she had known that her husband used it when she married him; but it troubled her that she and her husband should share such a responsibility. Leading him

gradually further into the light, she induced him to take employment elsewhere, where he was not required to deal in the evil thing, whose baleful effects she had seen fully exemplified. His change of employment removed her from the little bamboo trading-house up among the untaught "bushmen" of the river, back to the more civilized villages of the coast, and nearer to fellow-Christians and to the sound of the church-bell.

The regrets of the villagers whom they left were, naturally, mostly selfish, for the loss of her husband's trade-goods. But in some hearts there was pain for the loss of Mawedo's kindly aid with her needle, her example of civilized dress and manner that suggested possibilities for themselves, and a memory—vague, but, under the Spirit's impress, distinct enough for salvation—of her teachings about the Law of God and the Life of our Redeemer.

XXII. INTO THE SUNRISE.

Two years had passed over Mawedo while up the Ogowe with her husband, and another year with him in his new service was bringing her to the close of her fourth year of marriage and the twenty-fifth of her life. That life, that had been so checkered in childhood and youth, had in womanhood been marked by Christian usefulness and growth. And as during the past few years Mawedo had become less selfish in her aims, nobility had brought its own reward of happiness. Her married life had not been without the occasional clouds that, incident to human imperfection, blur the glad light from heaven for even loving hearts. But those clouds, quickly passing by, had cast only shadows, like the shadows that flit over waving summer fields. Yet the ripe grain-

heads beneath do not therefore cease their waving.

Only one regret for herself lay in the fact that no babe had been laid in her arms to gratify a desire that is prominent in the heart of every native African family. When the long-deferred wish was realized, and life became more than ever attractive, because of the associated life that was to make her husband more her own, her own life began to fade, and the mother's grave was soon made near that of her short-lived babe.

Mawedo's life faded away, but not in loneliness, or darkness, or sadness. Around her were interested connections of her husband's family, and kind fellow-Christians, and tender hands and voices of missionary friends. Their voices blended with the voice of her own nature, intensifying the wish that she might longer live on an earth that, in spite of its sinfulness, God was making lovely to her. But these utterances of human nature

Mawedo filially hushed as she marked the still, small voice of God's providence that said, "Come up higher." And grace was given her to gladly say, "I come." She knew the path on which her steps had entered, and her eyes looked not into an unknown distance. A light, more bright and beautiful than that of star or moon or sun, shed rays through the clouds that hung around and above that path. Faith saw the central Sun whence came the blessed rays; and Hope, that entered within the veil, saw in the gilding of those clouds the foretoken and earnest of a glory which no human fancy could paint or even conceive. Walls and domes and pillars, more real than the structures that the setting sun's changeful rays can build through the rainbow's drops, grew before her closing eyes. And her lips, in humble, trustful, truthful assurance, forbade the imputation of doubt or fear to her own heart, and strove to check the repining of

some who, weeping for themselves, would fain have kept her with them. To her husband, whom often she had "almost persuaded," she held out her hand's last affectionate touch as she stepped into the Light.

And he was persuaded. In view of Mawedo's departure, Christian faith triumphed. Heathen stood, not in dread, as at the deathbed of one of their own people, but awed and attracted by the solemn yet peaceful dignity of the scene. Where, to them, had always been darkness, seemed to shine a light that, beaming on the dusky face of their friend, irradiated it. And the dead lips of the wife and mother spoke a psalm of praise for the Gospel, that, taught by "all waters"—in hut, at school, through forest, on river; preached in the ear of the ignorant slave-mother, and practised in the life of the daughter—had shown its saving power for that mother and daughter, for the husband, and the brother.